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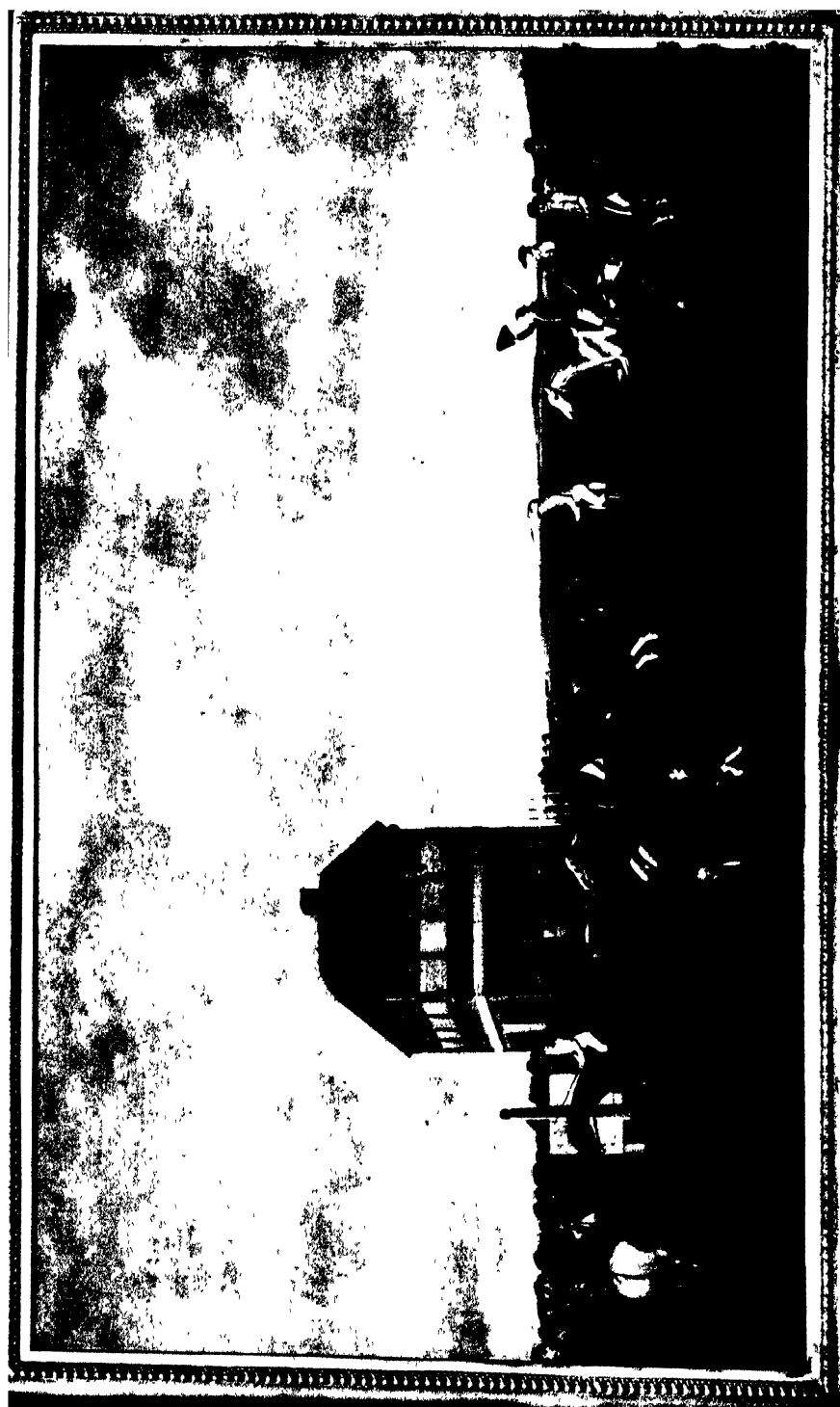


# THE ANALYSIS OF THE TURF









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OR

*The Duties and Difficulties of Racing Officials, Owners,  
Trainers, Jockeys, Bookmakers and Bettors,  
With Stories of Horses and Courses*

BY

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## INTRODUCTION

AFTER twenty-five years' intimate association with almost every phase of the Turf—behind the scenes in racing stables, in the dressing-room of mysteries, as an owner of alleged racehorses and, latterly, as a licensed race official—I find the views, estimates, and opinions with which I started out on my racing career materially altered. *Experientia docet!* It is so with all those who have profited by the lessons they have learnt. They discover that not only is their perspective altered, but also that very often they are entirely without a perspective. Thus it comes about that upon matters concerning which we were once ready to speak with certainty and finality, or to offer immediate criticism, many of us now express very guarded opinions, or maintain a discreet silence. It is those who say least on the Turf who often know most—or, at anyrate are credited with doing so! Just as it is sound advice to count twenty before halloaing on viewing a fox, so is it wisdom to be able to apply equal restraint in Turf matters. The supposed fox may after all only be a hare or, *if* a fox, it may turn back into covert—or it mayn't be the hunted fox.

A quarter of a century's close contact must teach anyone with average powers and opportunities of observation that it is rarely safe, equally rarely accurate, and so usually unfair, to attempt to diagnose, analyse, or even sit in judgment upon the conduct of either owners, trainers, jockeys, or horses unless (which is rarely the case) the self-appointed critic is in full possession of all the facts governing the particular occasion or incident subjected to microscopic examination. Time teaches us that the microscope is often hopelessly out of focus, that the lenses are frequently clouded, so that we think we see what we want to see rather than what actually exists in fact and truth. Moreover, experience brings



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## CHAPTER I

### SUPPOSED RASCALITY OF RACING. TURF ROGUES AND ROGUERY ANALYSED

WHEN I embarked upon a career as a writer on sport, and, I hope, on that of a sportsman, a cultured old lady, who had spent most of her days in a town and had very restricted ideas, asked regarding me : ‘ Then is he going in for running-dogs or pigeon-flying ? ’ That was her conception of sport. She might have a sort of hazy, detached knowledge that three or four times a year horses came from somewhere to run on the local race-course, but so far as her more or less intimate purview of sport went, whippet-racing and flying pigeons were the Alpha and Omega. She would probably have unhesitatingly admitted this in the consciousness of her limitations. The unfortunate fact is that there are thousands, little better qualified than she was to speak, who set themselves up as judge and jury and relegate all and sundry who are enthusiasts—either active or passive—in one branch or another of sport, as essentially degenerate, as almost belonging to a lower order, lacking in culture, given to rapacity and depravity, adepts at chicanery and trickery, untrusting and untrustworthy.

Much of this stricture—and I am not exaggerating or begging the question—is reserved for those of us who go racing. We are dyed the deepest black of a very dark-coloured flock. Hunting men may be brutal, they may revel in the destruction of a fox and glory in ‘ the kill.’ They may, with savage barbarity, watch with pride the innocent chubby faces of their children, or their children’s children, smeared with vulpine blood. Yes ! they may wallow

in primitive instincts and allow blood-lust to run riot, but they still remain respectable members of the community and do not prey upon each other. With racing men—so it is held by countless thousands—things are sadly different. Indeed, so serious is our case viewed, and so small is our chance of ever joining in the hallelujah chorus considered, that there is now an army of well-meaning missionaries specially told off to dog our footsteps and hand over gratuitous tickets to Hades, with no return half. I have never spoken, or thought, lightly of religion of any denomination. Some of the brands may amuse me—that is not *my* fault—some of them may astound me, but that particular sect which screeches through a megaphone ‘The wages of sin is death,’ as soon as the silence falls over the course after ‘They’re off,’ rather irritates and disgusts. I do not pose as a theological student, but I *do* know sufficient of the Giver of all Good to appreciate that this sort of conduct would never have been His. We are told there is nothing secular save sin, and as watching a number of horses, ridden by accomplished horsemen in a contest for speed and endurance, is not sin, the ‘wages’ parrot-cry falls rather flat.

There is one of these race-course missionary hirelings—himself a particularly sensual-looking man with a face so evil that he would be in danger of arrest on suspicion if a murder was committed in any district he happened to be visiting—who once made a dead set at me. Whether I appeared to him as a particularly bad case, or whether he imagined there was still hope of my conversion from Turfomania, I cannot say. Be that as it may, we seemed to meet face to face at meeting after meeting on the Northern circuit. At York I thought I had really dodged him, he must have thought so too, for he was on sentry-go near the club entrance murmuring some unintelligible incantation, and clutching a bundle of tracts to hand out to those who, for one or the other reasons cited, he selected. I admit he was a brave man—or is he, and his kind, of that rhinoceros-hided, nerveless, careless, order to whom jeers, insults, and abuse mean nothing? It may be they even glory in all these things and imagine they are suffering stripes, shipwreck, and other Pauline

perils, and all that sort of thing in a cause which is good and necessary.

There was an old woman I once knew who was very tired of life with all the pains and anxieties which came to her in her latter years. She longed to die and be at peace, but, as she remarked : ' God won't have given goods.' And so I think it is with these self-made martyrs—if such they feel themselves—the Almighty has little use for those who drag religion into disrepute and suffer for so doing.

I think it was a son of the immortal Dick Christian's who went as huntsman to the Hurworth Hounds and fell a victim to consumption. A fussy lady district visitor went to see him and plainly told him that by reason of his having hunted a pack of hounds he had jeopardised his chances of entering the beatific vision. She urged him to repent of his evil past as a hunt servant, and had a very patient and courteous hearing. When she began to gasp for breath, however, Christian said :

' Now I've listened to all you have to say. I know that I'm a dying man and that my number may be put up any time, but I'll tell you this. If wearing a red coat and riding good horses over a country up to a good pack of hounds is going to put the bar up against me entering heaven—*then I don't want to go*, and that's the plain English of it.'

How much better it would be if more of us spoke plain English and didn't allow conventionalities and what we consider ' polite restraint ' and ' consideration for the feelings of others ' to make hypocrites of us.

The self-appointed judges of sportsmen can never analyse, or understand—conscience, the inwardness, the underlying, motive and motif. They are personal attributes and qualities which are not transparent, or discernible, to the most astute appraiser of human character and human values. They may not even be fully understood, or even tabulated by the individuals whom they influence, but they are there for good or evil, and neither you nor I can accurately apportion or discover them in others, though we often flatter ourselves we can.

The ill-put on, ragamuffin sort of fellow who, if he approached us, we should expect would either want to beg or

sell a tip, may be at core a much better sportsman, in the best sense of the word, than either the swells in the Stewards' stand or the crowd in scarlet at a meet of hounds. He may have made all sorts of sacrifices to turn up at a race-meeting, or a fixture of hounds ; his incentive, ideals, hopes, interest, and affection may be centred much more in truth and all that is best in sport than our own. He may even understand all its science and niceties more thoroughly, and be willing to undergo much more fatigue and hardship in the pursuit of them. Yet I suppose the anti-sport missionaries would point to him and his apparent poverty as an example of the effects of sport. Poverty is a relative state, and no man is really poor whose heart and eye rejoice in the sight of a good horse, or whose ear is charmed and soul stirred by the music of a pack of hounds. Such a man possesses riches which are past the very, very circumscribed outlook of sport-decriers. To him—hang-gallas, down at the heel, and even coloured-nosed though he may be—many of us lift our glasses and drink the toast :

Here's a health to every sportsman, be he stableman or lord ;  
If his heart be true, I care not what his pocket may afford,  
And may he ever pleasantly each gallant sport pursue.

Well now, having cleared the air a little, let us return to the supposed villainy, degeneracy, and general depravity of those who are connected with sport—particularly the great national sport of racing. I was tickled at the time, and have been amused often since when I have recalled it, by a *bon mot* of Sir Abe Bailey's in his speech when the guest of the Ancient Fraternity of Gimcracks at York. He remarked on that occasion :

' I do not say that all those who go racing are rogues and vagabonds, but I *do* say that all the rogues and vagabonds seem to go racing.'

A good many of them *do*, but it is not because racing or sport in itself is wrong, but that where the carcase is there will the vultures gather. There is another reason. Even rogues and vagabonds seem to possess a certain Bohemian and nomadic temperament which (together with less artistic

circumstances), makes continuous change of scene, and something approaching perpetual motion, appeal to them. It is quite unfair, however, to draw any deductions as to the morality of sport from the fact that there are associated with it 'race gangs' (their number and villainy is much exaggerated), pick-pockets, and a great part of the scum of the country.

I remember a priest telling me that if a policeman walked into his church half the congregation would get up and walk out. 'Yes!' I hear you say, 'but a church is a fit and proper place for scoundrels.' You might even quote the good book: 'They that are whole need not a physician.' The very fact that some of those whose lives are not what is considered 'respectable,' and certainly would not bear too close a scrutiny, but who gravitate to a church, would suggest that they are not without some finer feeling. It would probably surprise some of the strong-lunged racing missionaries, who endeavour by sheer *tour de force* to bellow Christianity into those whom they imagine are on the high road to destruction, to know that whilst they slumbered many of those whom they consider damned and lost, worshipped. Now, I happen to be a Roman Catholic, and it is a practice of mine to attend early morning Mass every day of my life when circumstances permit. Hundreds of times when away at race meetings all over England and Scotland I have seen Turfites, whose faces are familiar as those of men who 'follow the meetings,' kneeling in church at their devotions. Now, though I take no credit to myself for piety, I *do* say that there is something sound at core about men whose religion will get them out of bed at seven o'clock in a morning to say their prayers and attend the Holy Sacrifice.

The average 'respectable' congregation—that type who are so ready to sit in judgment upon sportsmen—are apt to sing at the top of their voices 'Awake, my soul, and with the sun, my daily stage of duty run' at eleven o'clock in the morning. How the angels in heaven must laugh at such hypocrisy and anachronism! Here one has an acted lie offered to the Almighty as an affirmation of fealty—but not



even that till the streets have been well-aired and a hefty breakfast has been enjoyed !

An Anglican friend of mine with whom I have had many days' hunting and shooting—the Rev. J. L. Kyle, M.A. (he runs the pub. in his parish, by the way), has often told his flock from the pulpit that 'they don't do such things on the Turf,' when he has wanted to call attention to conduct which is not straight and above-board. Of course he had in mind the exemplary conduct of sportsmen—not of those non-descripts who are called 'sports.' That is a bastard word which means anything or nothing. In fact I have never known quite what it is meant to infer. Certainly it is something very different from the term 'sportsman.' Probably it is intended to be. Maybe it stands in the same relation to the real thing as does the 'gent' to the gentleman, or the 'genteelman' to the real genuine article. Any Tom, Dick, or Harry who is known to avail himself of race excursions, to be a patron of low-class boxing, to frequent places at which men who live by their wits on the fringe of sport, seems to be qualified for the category of 'sports.' They speak of owners, trainers, and jockeys by their Christian names, congregate where sportsmen foregather, and live—*somehow* ! Some of these even may be eligible for full entry to the noble army of sportsmen. Who knows ? We have no means of judging, and though professional betting men may not rank very high in the social scale, there is no earthly reason why they should all, holus-bolus, be written down as blackguards and outcasts. They certainly are *not* !

Neither is it fair nor accurate to claim that all that is best, truest, most honourable in the world of sport (I am speaking particularly of racing) is to be found in Tattersall's enclosure. I have never personally been in the cheaper rings, but I have known many men who, through tightness of the chest, go there. Of course, they'd rather 'come inside,' so that they might see the horses and rub shoulders with 'the heads' (another elastic and not always savoury term) ; but as their pockets don't run to it they go where they *may*, not where they *would*, to enjoy the sport. It always seems to me they must get very small return for their money, but let that pass.

They are victims of circumstances, but are not necessarily either rabble, or Turf flotsam and jetsam, therefore. Indeed, the flotsam and jetsam, the men who are really a nuisance on the Turf, and who do more than anyone else to bring it into ill-repute, by some mysterious means seem to have the *entrée* to the Holy of Holies—the paddock. How they manage it, how they get from meeting to meeting, how they subsist year by year, is as much an enigma to me in 1927 as it was when I first commenced to ‘ go racing ’ over a quarter of a century ago. I am not referring to the class not very picturesquely described as ‘ tale-tellers,’ ‘ lug-pullers,’ and ‘ touchers.’ Some of them were once sound men whom everyone respected. Things have gone wrong with them. ‘ Good things have come undone,’ they have given way to the bottle, or in their heyday they were over generous to all the sycophantic leeches who sponged on them. So they have fallen from the pedestal and now they grovel at the feet of those enjoying days of prosperity. The groveling is often irritating to those who are connected with the business side of racing. The ‘ dead-heads ’ know this and seek for the neophytes to prey upon.

I do not say that these men, who live by very keenly sharpened wits, are necessarily all crooks. Many of them are not. They may offend us, or sadden us, or be a disturbing factor, in ratio as their impecuniosity, or the fear of personal application for assistance, affects us. It is not a pleasant thing to see a man, once in the full swim of things, in the limelight, with money to burn, and hosts of friends (save the mark !) ‘ telling the tale.’ It calls for sympathy at a time when we have other fish to fry and don’t *want* to feel sympathetic. We know (and they know) they were fools—so have we been many a time—but there is nothing criminal in being a fool. There always *have* been fools in every walk of life, and they have made their own apple-pie bed upon which they have to lie. The unfortunate thing is that racing fools, or racing failures (much the same thing in the eyes of the world) advertise, and have advertised for them, their folly or failure, far more than those who go the wrong way in any other concern. It is much more respectable to lose a fortune

gambling in stocks and shares than to invest it on the chances of horses which don't show the form on the race-course they did at home. Probably only a very small circle of friends know of the 'unfortunate speculations' on the Stock Exchange, whereas when a man 'knocks' on the Turf, the story spreads like measles at a boarding school. What's more, if the losses are big enough, they are chronicled in history and revived from time to time by those who point the finger of warning or obloquy at the Turf. Now had it been a boat race, a building concern, or even a football match, *that* would have been quite a different thing. Few would have known about it, and those who did would call it 'bad luck.' There might be some who would nod their heads in superior, sage-like manner, and say 'a fool and his money are soon parted,' but there would be no suggestion of legerdemain, or unscrupulous conduct, no 'I told you so's,' 'What could you expect?' or 'Racing again!—it's always the same amongst those villains,' as when a fortune is lost on the Turf.

There was once a good sporting parson—there are many still, though they don't own racehorses nowadays as so many of them used to do—who had some horses in training with the Osbornes at Middleham. His name was the Rev. J. W. King, though he raced as 'Mr. Launde.' For some reason his Bishop seemed to have no objection to him owning racehorses till they *began to win races*. The world usually only condemns us for Turf transactions when we lose. Very dignified was the reply of Parson King to his diocesan, and the letter of a true Christian and sportsman was it he wrote. Listen :

'It is true that now for more than fifty years I have bred, and have sometimes had in training, horses for the Turf. They are horses highly prized, which I inherited with my estate, and the breed has been in my family for generations. It may be difficult, perhaps, to decide what constitutes a scandal in the Church, but I cannot think that in my endeavours to perpetuate this breed, and thus improve the horses in the country—an object of general interest at the present moment—I have done anything to incur your lordship's censure.

I am freely aware—as I think your lordship must be, too, by this time—that legal proceedings upon your part would be powerless against me, and if, therefore, I resign my living, which I hold within your lordship's diocese, it will not be from any consciousness of wrong, or from fear of any consequences which might ensue in the Ecclesiastical Courts, but simply because I desire to live the remainder of my days in peace and charity with all men, and to save your lordship the annoyance, and the church the scandal, of futile proceedings being taken against one who has retired some time from parochial ministrations, and is lying on the bed of sickness at this moment.'

It was to the Bishop of Lincoln to whom this letter was addressed. In the adjoining county of York a broader-minded bishop was once approached by a shocked churchman who told him that a certain curate was going to ride a horse of the late Sir George Wombwell's in the Grand National. 'Is he?' said the bishop; '*then I'll bet you he wins!*' The cleric (he rode as 'Mr. Ede' in this and many other races) *didn't* win the National though he was 'placed.'

Doubtless the public appetite which has encouraged the cheap Press to serve up sensations is in a large measure sponisible for this condemnation of the Turf. Yet there is probably more scandal in one little town street in a month than there is amongst those who play an active part on the Turf in a year. But the little street is looked upon as 'respectable' and, by its detractors, the Turf isn't—that makes a great deal of difference. Then the dishonourable conduct, the immorality, the licentiousness and concupiscence, the chambering and wantonness, the secret drinking, and all the rest of it, of those in No. 1 of the little street are possibly not even known to those who live in No. 32. They are not served up as the big-typed 'Special' in the evening paper unless No. 1 takes it into his head to murder No. 32. Let there be a breath of scandal in connection with the Turf, however, and it is served up as the important feature of the day's paper. You all know the sort of thing: 'Another Turf Scandal,' 'Doping Sensation,' 'Another Jockey Warned Off,' 'Race-gangs at Work Again'—and so on and so on.

If I seem to labour this point it is because there is such an insistent challenge to sportsmanship in sport, such as the oft-repeated suggestion that, so far as racing goes, if the gambling element were eliminated racing would cease, because it is the main loadstone. It is not within the scope of this analysis to enquire into the polity of wagering or into its morality. It must be admitted that without betting racing could not continue on its present footing. That is the outcome of evolution, and in no sense evidence of deterioration in the sport. In the old days there were comparatively few horses in training, stakes were small, expenses in connection with breeding, owning, training, and running bloodstock were correspondingly small, as were those essential upon the conduct of a race meeting. The old conditions were admittedly very sporting, if extremely uncomfortable and primitive. They would not draw the crowds which go racing to-day, nor could the present generation afford to breed high-priced bloodstock to run for stakes varying from £10 10s. to the Royal 100 guineas, the latter of which were 'the big races' of a century ago. To meet the altered conditions the betting-ring is essential, though it is a known fact that wagering is now not nearly so high as in the days of the merry past and the leviathan bookmakers. Query: When did the first bookmaker 'stand up'? No one seems to know.

We are told that it is betting that is the bed-rock of all evil in connection with racing and sport generally. There are those, as I have already said, who trace to wagering half the murders, suicides, unhappy homes, embezzlements, and so forth. Betting, some tell us, is the superstructure upon which gaols are built, whilst others declare that it is an ever-flooded river which flows on towards those gaols to keep them supplied with inmates. Both statements are exaggerations, though there is truth in them nevertheless. There always has been gambling, and there always will be in some shape or form. There was gambling before there was horse-racing, and there'd be gambling if every race-course were closed down to-morrow. As it is, there is probably as much gambling on events and contests entirely apart from horse-racing as there is in connection therewith. But is it an accurate deduction

that evolution and the coming of the bookmaker have transformed the Turf into commercialism and have brought in their wake a crowd of undesirables who were unknown in other days? I do not think so, in fact the story of the past goes to show that as a moving army has always had camp followers, who are not of it but live on it as parasites, so the racing army has for all time had its followers who do not always add to its reputation. But as the presence of camp followers does not mean that the individuals of the army, or the army as a whole, are any the less valorous or well-disciplined, so the fact that there is a certain section of the racing crowd which is either just out of gaol, or qualifying for re-admittance, should not be taken into consideration when analysing the influence of the Turf or the character of the main body of racing men proper.

I have said that before the days of betting as we know it now, and of bookmakers, there was the same army of flotsam and jetsam who 'followed the meetings.' So early as 1829 we read in connection with Carlisle Races that 'more than 200 regular thieves had left Doncaster Races on the way northward to prey upon the natives at the autumn fairs. Many of them are accompanied by girls of ill-fame, whose task it is to decoy country-men into a situation where they can be robbed with facility.' Indeed, Doncaster became so notorious for thieves and thimble-riggers, and the executive seemed so indifferent, that a very high Turf authority told them quite plainly that it was not absolutely necessary that the St. Leger should be run at Doncaster—a hint which had the desired effect.

Nowadays more is spent in 'policing' a race meeting than it took to run one, stakes and all, in the old days, and in addition there is gradually being formed a regular plain clothes staff of police who act independently of the local force, and know all the regular 'boys' who go racing. 'Ah,' says the Turf detractor, with pointed finger and judicial expression, 'what more conclusive evidence could you want of the character of racing men, when it is necessary to have a strong force of police, and even a private force of detectives, to keep them in order?' Then he eloquently shrugs his

shoulders with satisfaction, like a barrister who has made a witness on the other side give away the case he was expected to bolster up. But the fact of the matter is that the police are present to protect the legitimate race-goer and keep order *for him*—not to keep sportsmen in order. They are engaged to protect law-abiding thousands when they gather together to enjoy racing, just as they are present to protect them at a religious pageant, at a Sunday School gala—yes, and even at a parochial jumble sale, for priority of entrance to which frowsy ladies in capes (worn not without purpose) struggle. Where there are crowds, there also will be—and in the present state of human nature—must be, ‘bobbies,’ both in blue and plain clothes.

There is more charity, more real milk of human kindness, and (I say it with full consciousness of its weight) more real practical Christ-like conduct amongst the regular racing fraternity, than in most of the religious sects I have any knowledge of. There may be no parade of Christianity, no public or professional praying at street corners, nor blatant bellowing of the love of the good God ; but no one with intimate acquaintance of the lives of owners, trainers, jockeys, bookmakers, yes ! and even professional betting men, and the rest of the legitimate, ever-moving army, but knows how the greatest thing on earth—love ! is found ever permeating and percolating. It is a love, a sympathy and a charity which well up from great and generous hearts, not spasmodically, but week by week and day by day. Ask the Sisters of Charity, ask those noble Brothers of St. Vincent de Paul, ask the poor in towns visited two or three times a year by racing crowds, ask priests and ministers who have themselves asked, and ask the down-and-out who were once members of the great racing army. The answer will be the same. It will tell of quiet, secret, unostentatious kindness and generosity. Poor Martin Gurry, the trainer, once gave a set of communion plate to a church and said, in his simplicity when asked if he wanted it inscribed, “Yes, put on it ‘from Gurry to God.’ ” Of course his suggestion was not followed, but, after all, could his suggestion have been improved ? Didn’t he express the very inwardness of ideal and true charity ?

It is true that many who frequent the Turf are lacking in one of the great attributes of charity, which is to think no evil. There are, amongst a section of them, a certain suspiciousness, a certain quickened and alert sense of precaution and even cunning, such as one finds in wild animals which have to fight for their existence. There is the slyness of the fox, the secretiveness and isolation of the badger, the sinuous rapidity of action of the stoat, and the hatred of being watched possessed by the otter. 'Let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth,' say the Scriptures, and we all know that type of Turfite who hides himself in the weighing-room to avoid being questioned, or who will only converse in quiet corners of the paddock, and then in a whisper. This may seem out of tune with sport *quâ* sport and all its traditional brotherhood, yet the condition has arisen through force of circumstances—the importuning of Tom, Dick, or Harry, who wish those who are paid to keep secrets, to divulge them. Do you remember what Ben Jonson wrote in *The Case is Altered*?

He who trusts a secret to his servant,  
Makes his own man his Master.  
A secret in his mouth  
Is like a wild bird put into a cage,  
Whose door no sooner opens but 'tis out.

There is a suspicion, there is secrecy, and there is not infrequently wilful deceit. There is also a common saying 'Ask no questions and you'll be told no lies.' It is those who pester owners, trainers, and jockeys for 'information' who have most experience of this closeness and dumbness—men who have no right to be placed in possession of facts, hopes or expectations. And it is this very class who, whilst girding at the suspicion of others, are often most suspicious themselves and do so much to drag the name of the Turf through the mire. How often when travelling in race trains have we heard irresponsible, dissatisfied men definitely and emphatically assert that such and such horses 'never tried a yard,' that such and such jockeys 'pulled the heads off' certain animals—that it was 'Johnny Armstrong' with them? These same babblers, who froth and talk with a desire to



appear 'in the know' and *au fait* with the mysteries behind the scenes, can at a moment's notice turn on the tap of villainy and relate conduct, so despicable and so contrary to the rules of racing and the true traditions of sport, that were a moiety of it true, half the trainers, owners, and jockeys who hold licences should be 'warned off,' and no gentleman or sportsman would allow his name to be associated with such a low-down, entirely rotten and dishonest business.

The unfortunate thing is that the casual race-goer, and those opposed to racing, listen to all this rhodomontade as gospel—listen to it open-mouthed as though each of these babblers were Sir Oracle himself. They don't seriously mean half they say, but they have got into the habit of frothing, libelling, and lying, either for the sake of talking or for what they imagine to be personal aggrandisement. Nevertheless they are the Father of Lies and smear filth over the very bridge they use almost day by day. It is a peculiar fact that let someone else get in first with *his* lies and begin to paint that bridge black and they would immediately produce a white-wash brush and howl down the opposition as talking 'through his hat' about something upon which he is not qualified to speak. They, who so frequently ask, 'Where were the eyes of the stewards?' now say 'Don't you think the gentlemen who act as stewards—men of wide knowledge and experience, of irreproachable conduct and impartial view—would be down in a minute on any such malpractices as you say are rife?' This *volte face* has often amused me, just as the unrestrained relation of tales of imaginary Turf villainy has irritated me.

Of course the most ardent, picturesque, and most virulent detractors of the whole Turf system and those connected with it are the 'converted racing men'—those whom one of the narrow and puritanical sects has enlisted in its ranks. From the accounts they give of their own erstwhile conduct and habits one feels grateful to the sect which withdrew them into their fold from the Turf arena. Nothing short of murder seems to have been too bad for them, and they apparently thoroughly enjoy the narration of their own past infamy. Of course they wind up as a sort of anti-climax by throwing

their hands towards heaven and saying—‘ *That* is life on the Turf. I am a living example of one who has lived that life—a brand snatched from the burning, now on the straight and narrow path which leads to a glorious hereafter no racing man can ever hope to enjoy.’ It would be better for individuals, for society in general, and the Turf in particular, if more of these rascals were influenced by the boisterous religious sects and persuaded to abjure the race-course for ever. They are the very men who, never belonging to the great racing public proper, are supposed to be the standard type of its morals, its temper, and its influence. The less sane section of the public accepts them as having been the Q.E.D. of racing, and in a position to speak from interior, intimate, and indisputable knowledge. ‘He’s been through it all, you know, and makes no secret of the awful villainy and rascality.’ ‘He’s in a position to speak, for he’s been a party to it all and does not repeat mere “he say or she say.”’

Well, that is the estimate of values which a considerable portion of the British public gives to these ‘convert revelations.’ It never seems to strike them that if they really wanted to learn, say of the morals of the War Office, they wouldn’t go to the office boy who had done nothing more than lick the envelopes of letters the contents of which he knew nothing of. Or, if they were anxious to form a really accurate or impartial view as to the inner conduct of a great banking house or commercial concern, they wouldn’t place too much credence on the evidence of a junior clerk, who had given way to dishonesty. I don’t know though, perhaps they would believe all that was told them if it was served up with sufficient spice and worked upon their emotion—especially if what they heard was exactly what they *wanted* to hear !

A well-known priest tells a story of some boys who were playing a game of chess and were asked what they would do if they were suddenly told they had only an hour to live. One said he would seek out a confessor, the other said he would finish his game. I think that if many of us were told on the race-course that within an hour we were to be called into that other room in God’s house we should feel that we

could quite comfortably go straight from the paddock without any fear of reprimand or that we were in any way prejudicing our future. That is a supreme test, that puts the Turf into the refiner's fire. Personally I think it could stand that test, and that—I say it with all reverence—the God of happiness has no frown for those who get all that is best out of the spice of life.

Of course there are men—owners, trainers and jockeys, and others—who do not go straight. There always have been such on the Turf, and in every other branch of sport, since sport was instituted. It would be fatuous to deny this. There is complete openness about it all when the governing body of the Turf get sufficient evidence upon which to act. They act quickly and they act drastically. Their punishment is published for all and sundry to read. The Stewards of the Jockey Club and of the National Hunt Committee are Argus-eyed and often have well-founded suspicions before they take action. Their endeavour is to see that the rules which are framed to keep sport clean—an honourable pastime for honest men—are obeyed. Occasionally—and only occasionally—the most important of them are *not* obeyed, and then comes the inevitable exposure and ignominy. There is no concealment, the sensational Press makes the most of it, and the man in the street—even those who are not professional opponents of racing—wag their heads and say ‘There you are ; that tells you what state the Turf is in and why we never back a winner.’ Occasional misdemeanours are looked upon as daily occurrences, and the whole of the Turf *personnel* proper is judged by the culpable dregs.

There are, of course, other Turf embroideries who are looked upon as being an integral part of the Turf and part of its baneful influence. I refer to the ‘tipsters,’ amongst others. Of course if there was no racing there would be no racing tipsters. That is a very self-evident fact. But if there are knaves who make a trap for fools—though all tipsters are by no means knaves—are we to condemn a system because of parasites who live on it ? You know the old saying about the bigger fleas having lesser fleas on their backs to bite ‘em, and ‘the lesser fleas’ having smaller fleas, and so on *ad*

*infinitum*? Isn't it so throughout life in any concern, or undertaking, or phase we come to analyse? The fact may not be a pleasant one, but fact it is. Holy Church, charitable institutions, all manner of organisations, have those who are nominally connected, who strike a one-sided co-partnership (not recognised, or not realised, by the main body) simply for their own ends. They have no concern with ideals, they are not corporate members—they are merely leeches, blood-suckers, exploiters, whose conduct sooner or later, quite unfairly, brings the organisations they are supposed to represent into disrepute. This has probably always been so and will always be so. It proves nothing, however, save that human nature is what it is and that there are a certain number of men who will always be opportunists. It is as sound an argument to say that the mint is dishonest and should be closed down because a few men make spurious coin, as that racing should be stopped because a certain number of men make a livelihood by selling tips. No mint, no counterfeiters; no racing, no tipsters. They are, in a way, analogous cases. Yet the mint is no more responsible for those who make base coin than the Turf is accountable for those who sell either good or bad tips. If it were really possible for these professional 'advisers,' as they call themselves, to find winners consistently, well, there would soon be an end of bookmakers and of betting. Incidentally, too, I suppose the prophets would themselves become very wealthy men, which very few of them are. It is safe to say that those who are foolish enough to waste their substance on the prophecies of the prophets, would waste it in some other way if the prophets had no honour, either in their own or any other country. The point is that the said prophets are a fungus which has grown out of the Turf and are not indigenous to the soil, as the casual enquirer is led to believe.

Of course we are glibly told that 'birds of a feather flock together.' The usual significance of this is that the *genus homo* who are of shady character, the law-breakers, those of immoral life, and those who have lost all self-respect and love to associate with 'low company,' are attracted by sympathy and herd together. But I have shown, or I think I have

shown, that racing is sound and sweet at its core, that those who can be considered to be really actively concerned with it are equally sound at core and that no finger of reproach can justly be pointed at them. So the very decrepit 'birds of a feather' suggestion has no sort of application. If it had it would convey the impression that the race-course drew to its centre—its *centre* mark you, not its embroideries—the kindest, most generous, most unselfish, and most practical Christians in the world. It *does* draw many of them, and the fact that they have an occasional wager, endeavour to bring off a *coup* now and then, and have a bottle of 'fizz' when they succeed, does not alter all this in the eyes of the Creator some of us have pictured for ourselves.

The type of man who brings far more discredit upon sport in general, and racing in particular, is he who is constantly engaged in what is known colloquially as 'the besting game.' It is a strange thing, but none the less true, that association with horses, be it dealing, or running, training or riding, seems to have a lowering influence on some men. They lose all the best attributes of sport, become narrow in outlook, lose culture and all the finer touches of civilisation. I say this with regret, and I cannot offer any explanation. Without professing to be students of physiognomy we can see it in the faces of some men. They are debased, brutalised, often even repellent. These are the men who practise 'the besting game.' The strange thing about it is that some of them prefer to make money by 'twisting,' by some chicanery or legerdemain, than honestly. They pit *their* wits against the wits of others and find a curious satisfaction and grim humour in triumph. I don't mean that they work 'the confidence trick,' or manipulate three cards or a pea under a thimble. No ! they consider themselves far and away above this in the table of Turf precedence. They wouldn't pick a man's pocket in the sense of illegal pick-pocketing, but they'd do it by duel of wits, by taking down a flat, the trusting, or the neophyte. They'd do it, too, to the old-stager if he had truck with them and hadn't one hand on a revolver and the other hold of his purse. Of course I speak metaphorically.

I am sorry to say there is rather more than a smattering of this class—men to ‘be watched,’ men of whom it is said ‘you must be careful, if you have dealings with them’—amongst the regular Turf army. Sometimes they were what is called ‘born crooked.’ Sometimes they have become habitual ‘besters’ by force of circumstances ; it is affection pure and simple for a duel of wits. These men become known and are often referred to as ‘the clever brigade.’ Well, they don’t last, they queer their own pitch, and find that they are not allowed to occupy another. The pity of it is there always seems someone else ready to take over the pitch they have vacated. How they last as long as they do is a mystery to me. How they get from one race meeting to another, let alone live, is a still greater conundrum. There are owners, trainers, and jockeys amongst them, and these are always riding for the fall which inevitably comes sooner or later.

I believe that the rogue has a shorter life on the Turf than in any other walk of life, simply because there is a marvellous freemasonry and brotherhood there which is out to protect those—and they constitute the greater majority—who want to go straight and above board. Once a man has been found guilty of despicable, underhand conduct, once he has proved himself to be at the ‘besting game,’ he becomes a pariah. His ill-deeds are canvassed as though he was suffering from leprosy, and, though he may be tolerated, within the charmed circle he is treated in much the same manner as one treats a tame fox (if there is such a thing !)—always with the feeling that at any moment he might find the impulse of the wild return and bite. There is a certain amount of hypocrisy and a good deal of strain in our relations with such men. Their circle of friends diminishes, cold handshakes freeze into colder and colder nods, and at last they become only the associates of those of their own ‘besting’ kidney. Then Turk indeed meets Turk !

I have tried to be quite candid in this little analysis of the *personnel* of the racing army. I have not painted all its officers or the rank and file as plaster saints. They aren’t. Far from it. What I *have* insisted upon, and *do* insist upon, is that the

vast majority of both the officers and subordinates actually 'on the strength' are men of unblemished character as sportsmen and gentlemen. After all the two honoured and honourable titles mean pretty much the same as applied to life and the manner in which one meets and goes through life. The true sportsman at heart must be a gentleman at heart too, and the gentleman must be a sportsman in the true, fullest, and best sense of the word, or he couldn't be a gentleman.

I have seen every side of racing, both behind the scenes in racing stables and on the course ; I have seen one generation come and go, and many, many changes in between ; I have watched, and marked and learned and inwardly digested with a perfectly open mind for a quarter of a century. What I have here set down is not so much mere opinion as a marshalling of considerable evidence. There are many who could have done it better, but not many who have had wider opportunities of collecting that evidence, sifting it, testing it, and then giving what my lord on the judicial bench would call 'a considered opinion.' Perhaps that which has been here said will reveal the Turf in another light to some. It may serve to convince the man in the street that there are after all not so many 'stumours,' not so many horses which 'haven't their heads loose,' not so many jockeys who either 'pull' horses for their owners or allow the one they and their 'ring' have backed, to win. What has been said may have shown that owners and trainers are not quite so clever as to arrange amongst themselves that '*You win this week and we'll back you, and we'll win next week and you back us.*' How trainers and owners wish they could keep the horses under their charge at the top of their form and in condition to win races just when they pleased to 'put the money down' ! The secret for this has yet to be discovered ; I had almost written that it does not exist.

Therein lies one of the grave errors of those who adversely criticise racing. They hold the view that racehorses are machines that can be 'stopped,' started, and their speed increased or decreased to winning or losing point, at will,

and that such horses as are able to win once could always win races if those who owned and controlled the equine machines wished it. Temperament, accidents, altered ‘ company,’ circumstances and weights, different courses and distances, staleness or unfitness, do not enter into their calculations. I am afraid there are some owners, particularly ladies (whose numbers and influence so increase on the Turf), who hold pretty similar views. They want their horses to keep on winning when once they have won, and do not seem able to realise that many thoroughbreds are a bundle of nerves and that the excitement of travel, strange stables, crowds and racing itself, takes a great deal out of them—some of them, that is. This accounts for a good deal of what is called ‘ in and out running,’ upon which those who do not understand are apt to look with suspicion. Much of this suspicion has been handed down as a sort of tradition on the Turf and seems to—only seems to—receive support and justification by the occasional *exposés* to which reference has already been made. It isn’t the horses which are suspect but those intimately concerned with them—the owner, the trainer, the jockey, and sometimes ‘ nobblers.’ They are spoken of as being ‘ cute,’ ‘ fly,’ ‘ a warm party,’ and all the rest of it, whereas it is often they who are the biggest sufferers both as regards finance and shattered hopes. Every race-horse is an individual study. The general public thinks of them as a corporate body like a troop of cavalry. No trainer can treat the animals under his charge in bulk. Indeed, old Tom Green, one of the cleverest trainers we had in the North, used to say ‘ I wouldn’t take five hundred apiece for my yearlings till I’ve tried ’em, and then I would sell a lot of ’em for two pennoth o’ gin.’ That gives some idea of the lottery of bloodstock. Tom Green could have gone further had he been so minded, and said that even some of his swans at home were certain to prove geese when he got them on to a race-course.

Racing is well named ‘ the glorious uncertainty.’ There are no such things as ‘ racing certainties,’ and the sooner this fact is realised the sooner will disappointments end—disappointments which breed suspicions, anathemas, and all



manner of evil imaginations as to the inner workings of the Turf. It is the ignorant and the dissatisfied who see evil where no evil is, and who strike with venomous tongue, like a snake in the grass.

As I have already said, it is outside the scope of this analysis to discuss the polity of betting. Personally I cannot quite grasp the viewpoint of the man who never goes to see a race and yet has his daily wager—'backing his fancy,' as he calls it. I suppose it adds a bit of colour and the spice of excitement to the monotony of his life, and, so long as he only bets to the extent he can really afford to lose, he might just as well buy his fun this way as 'going to the pictures,' or choosing some other method of enjoyment. Anyhow, you and I have no right to dictate to him or to tell him he is doing wrong, certainly we have no right to tell him he is a hardened sinner and that his example is leading others along the same slippery, down-hill path to destruction, that is, so long as his conduct is not prejudicial to his family and to society at large. I have no earthly right to say to any man 'because you do not go to a race meeting you shall not bet,' or yet that he is, within proper limits known best to himself, a covetous, and therefore a sinful, man if he *does* have his 'bit on.' I may consider him foolish, but after all that is only my own opinion. Certainly I don't think him covetous any more than the man who buys a raffle ticket or competes for a big newspaper prize. There is no allowance made by those who cavil and speak of coveting, for the fun of losing. I have bought hundreds of raffle tickets for articles varying from a pig to a piano, a £10 note to a motor car, but I've never won anything in my life. Nevertheless there is always a mild excitement in feeling that I may become the owner of a pig for twopence, or a motor car for sixpence. Of course I always hope against hope that I shall win the pig, or piano, or whatever it may be, but I don't make an idol of the unwon piano. I've paid my twopence or sixpence, I've had a run for my money, the fun of anticipation (at any rate for two minutes after buying the soon-forgotten ticket), and so I've had value for my money. Because I have never won a pig or a ham, or any other blessed thing in which I have had a stake to

the value of my ticket, I don't for one moment imagine there was some 'jiggery-pokery' about 'the draw,' or that there has been an 'if' somewhere in the business. So, I believe that much of the talk of covetousness is all moonshine. Of course, human nature being what it is, we all like to win. There is a certain triumph in it, apart altogether from the fact that we are richer to the extent of a pig or a pound.

In racing the triumph of him who has backed a winner is made up of a certain amount of conceit that in spite of the views of others, and maybe the jeers of would-be 'putters off,' he has proved himself right. Therein comes as great, or greater, enjoyment than the actual drawing of the money. At least that is the case with many men. In his recently published book Mr. Richard Marsh tells us that the late Duke of Hamilton looked equally, or more, pleased when he lost as when he won.

Those whose sole thought, aim, and objective is to enrich themselves by racing, in whatever degree, are not sportsmen, no matter what their status. Of course there *are* such men. I suppose if we could read hearts, there are some ministers of religion who are more concerned with the loaves and fishes accruing from their position than the shepherding of their flock. But no one would say that all ministers of religion were covetous self-seekers. It would be an abominable lie to say so. It is equally untrue to say that the superstructure of all wagering is an inordinate longing for something for which we have given no just value and to which we can therefore have no right in moral law, justice, or equity. It is a common remark and a common superstition amongst small wagerers 'if I have my shilling on a horse it is certain to stop it.' Surely that does not betray that spirit of sinful longing for the money of another of which we hear so much. To a great extent the whole thing is a huge joke with a good laugh and spice of excitement in it. The pity is when individuals amongst the stay-at-home backers treat their bets otherwise.

And so I bring to an end this analysis of criticism—usually ignorant and usually harsh—of those who go to make up the

Turf world. I think I have established the truth of what Ruskin says :

‘ In general all fatal, false reasoning proceeds from people having some one false notion in their hearts, with which they are resolved their reasoning shall comply.’

If this is too subtle for some the quatrain by Robert Louis Stevenson cannot fail to be both understandable and applicable :

There is so much bad in the best of us,  
There is so much good in the worst of us,  
That it ill-behoves any of us  
To find fault with the rest of us.

## CHAPTER II

### EQUINE ROGUES AND SAVAGES, AND STORIES OF OTHER HORSES

How kind the gentle look of those clear eyes  
Turned so enquiringly on this gay scene ;  
Yet in their depths the battle-fire slumbering lies  
Till your brave hoofs shall thunder on the green  
In the fierce fight for honour, fame and prize ;  
And all your strength and speed and gracefulness  
Framed picture-like within the paddock's stress  
Wakes into being when the ' gate ' shall rise.  
Men may degrade you, sell your pace for gold,  
Rogues, knaves and sharpers cluster in your wake  
And scan the records for their sordid art,  
No blame to you, still as in days of old,  
Noblest of creatures, worthily you take  
The pride of place in England's sport-girt heart.

ALAN HAIG BROWN.

WHEN one remembers what highly strung animals thoroughbred horses are, and how artificial is the life and environment of those put into training to compete on the Turf, it is not after all surprising that amongst them there should be ' savages ' and ' man-eaters.' There always have been such amongst racehorses and probably there always will be. Hot temper, viciousness, and excitability are inherent in certain equine strains and families, just as marked, faithfully handed down, and perpetuated as other outstanding characteristics. Sometimes it is bred out in the course of years as the result of crossing and careful treatment, but it will be shown later how apt temper and the sins of the sire are to be passed on to the progeny for generations. Right down the history of the development of the racehorse and the annals of the Turf, however, there have been instances of racehorses which, without bearing the brand of Cain, and without inheriting

hot and savage blood in their pedigrees, have become a danger to the life and limb of those who have had to ride or 'do' them. In only comparatively few cases has the original cause of their conversion from rational and docile creatures to equine lunatics been recorded.

Except where savagery and vice have been bred in the bone, there has certainly been some definite reason for race-horses showing a violent dislike and even hatred of the *genus homo*, and becoming a danger to all those brought into close contact with them. Brutal treatment by stable-boys has not infrequently occasioned a complete change of temper and conduct, the unmerciful use of whip and spur by jockeys at a time when the animals were doing their utmost, has made savages of other horses; even constant teasing has been known to destroy the temper of some.

The mentality of the thoroughbred is difficult to analyse. Probably each is an individual study with its own peculiarities like human beings. The difficulty of analysis and complete understanding (so far as we *can* understand the inwardness of animals) is not that the thoroughbred is less transparent, or more complex, than any other breed (I should say that the contrary was the case) but that the opportunity of studying the equine aristocrat, and of close association, are fewer.

Those of us who have had favourite hunters and have come to understand their every mood and peculiarity, have only reached that state of sympathy and fuller appreciation after riding them from morning till night, maybe spending hours with them in their boxes, and generally making companions of them. The same applies to hacks and horses we have driven. Close and constant contact, in all sorts of places, and under all manner of conditions, has brought about a mutual confidence, and probably a fairly accurate diagnosis of temperament, inwardness, and ability to decide 'what will happen next.' Moreover, and this is important, both man and animal come to such a complete understanding that both are able to decide what is mere playfulness, or buoyancy of spirit, and what is the outcome of anger, or in the nature of a threat that worse may follow if a certain line

of conduct is persisted in. This understanding, I would emphasise, makes for *mutual* confidence, which is so essential and potent in winning races and riding a horse bang up to hounds.

Much of this, which may be termed interchange of confidence, is, as I have said, impossible in the case of the racehorse, simply because when in training he spends the greater part of his life in solitary confinement, so that anything approaching intimacy on the part of the owner, the trainer, or the jockeys who may be called upon to ride him, is impossible. The trainer, or his head lad, sees each of the horses paraded morning by morning, and inspects them with practised eye to assure himself they are sound and in normal health. Having satisfied himself on that score, away goes the string for two hours' exercise—more or less, according to physical condition, the manner in which each horse is feeding, what they have done in the immediate past, or are expected to do in the immediate future. Two hours is the average—a walk to the gallops, a canter or two, more walking, and then back to the boxes in which they spend the remainder of the twenty-four hours of most days. Twice a day they are 'strapped' for an hour or more, not merely for the sake of cleanliness and to bring a polish on their silken coats, but to draw blood to the muscles, make them hard, and give the same benefits as does massage to human beings. To many horses with very fine skins this daily stable-time is an irritation calculated to upset their tempers and, because of this, the famous father of the also famous and still hale and hearty William I'Anson of Malton, would never have his thoroughbred stallions in training dressed in the usual way. They were only wiped over, the old trainer holding the view that the constant annoyance and tickling, which necessitated correcting and threatening of stallions, made them sour and tended to make savages.

Apart from the exercise and stable-time, racehorses are kept under lock and key, and have few opportunities of understanding or being understood by anyone except the lad who 'waits on them,' or 'does them.' True, during the summer months, the top halves of box doors in many training

stables-yards are thrown open so that the occupants can see each other and watch the movements of such of the boys who are not sleeping, whilst when they make their often long journeys to fulfil their engagements at distant race meetings, they also come into contact with the world and men and matters, which familiarises them and broadens their minds. Even so, the very process of being boxed on the rail, of being shunted, detrained, and taken amongst traffic to race-course stables, is apt to upset many horses both in nerve and temper, and to have a deleterious effect rather than that of education and a fuller understanding.

I have written at some length regarding the limited opportunities of mutual intercourse between racehorses and those connected with them because I think it is a potent factor in the making of equine savages—those screaming, white-of-eye and teeth-showing man-eaters, which have frequently fatally attacked those who have ridden them, and, indeed, all and sundry who have come within reach at times when they have been showing their worst side.

Now let us examine some cases of notoriously savage racehorses, the conduct of which shows them to have been either equine lunatics, or so soured in temper as to have lost all confidence in mankind and become imbued with deep hatred and determination to do bodily hurt. Of course in some cases vice has been only transient, a temporary phase—the outcome of extreme excitement (sexual or otherwise), irritation, resentment, or fear. Under these conditions most horses may be guilty of spasmodic conduct quite foreign to their true and normal characters, or their true attitudes towards man, serious, nevertheless, as the results may be.

I have often told the story of Vatican—perhaps the most savage of all the long list of racehorse savages, and the most mad of all equine lunatics. Whatever may have been the original cause of his dreadful temper, wild frenzies, and hatred of human beings—indeed all living creatures—the treatment to which he was subjected was not calculated to make him any more kindly disposed to mankind. Vatican was a bay colt by Venison, out of Vat, a mare bred by Lord Sligo. She was by Langar, her dam was Wire, a sister to Whalebone,

by Waxy, out of Penelope. Foaled in 1846, Vatican did well for Sir Joseph Hawley, but was unfortunate in meeting a horse like the Flying Dutchman in both the Derby and St. Leger of 1849. In the latter classic he was ridden by J. Marson and, starting joint-second favourite with Nunnykirk, finished third. Other progeny by Venison was notoriously 'hot,' but Vatican's successful career on the Turf continued till he was six years old, despite all the trouble he gave. In 1851 Nat Flatman rode him to victory in the Ascot Stakes, and in September of the same year Vatican was the cause of an objection at Doncaster, though this incident in his career had nothing to do with his temper. Sir Joseph Hawley, his owner, had had a wonderfully successful meeting, having won the great Yorkshire Handicap with The Confessor, a Handicap Plate with Clincher, both the Park Hill and Doncaster Stakes with Aphrodite, and the Doncaster Cup with The Ban. Mr. Saxon, whose Black Doctor was second in the last-named event, laid an objection on the ground that Sir Joseph had run two horses—The Ban and Vatican—in the race, contrary to then existing rules. The stewards later referred the matter to the Jockey Club who were 'satisfied that a *bona fide* sale of Vatican to Mr. Morris took place previous to the race.' They were of opinion, however, that the Doncaster stewards were in error in allowing Vatican to start, having been entered in Sir Joseph Hawley's name. Vatican won the Oatlands Plate at Newmarket next month and in 1852 only ran three times, carrying off the York Spring Cup and starting favourite on his final appearance (the Grosvenor Stakes at Chester), but being beaten out of a place.

Vatican then went to stud and, though difficult to dress and handle when in training at Alec Taylor's, it was only after he came into the hands of William Stebbing, high up on the historic Hambleton training grounds above Thirsk, that he developed into the really terrible horse he seems to have been. The Stebbing family had a long experience with bloodstock, so that they knew how to handle them, and just why Vatican became a 'man-eater' and incorrigible savage either seems to have been kept a secret or not to have been



known, though there are any amount of memories remaining of his ferocity in North Yorkshire to this day. The late Mr. William Allison ('The Special Commissioner'), who was born at Kilvington, under the shadow of the Hambleton Hills, opened his book, *My Kingdom for a Horse*, with an allusion to Vatican, possibly his first introduction to the thoroughbred, of which he became such a prominent and intimate friend in later years. Thus poor Allison :

'I cannot cure him, do vat I can !' Such was the remark William Stebbing made in my presence in 1857, when I, as a very small boy indeed, with my father and mother and the late Mr. Jos. Arrowsmith, of Sowerby, Thirsk, . . . were in the stables at Hambleton, and Mr. Simpson, as self-sufficient men will do, had walked up to a horse in one of the stalls and narrowly escaped being lifted to the ceiling by a vigorous kick. The horse, however, was roped and chained from every side, and he screamed, roared, and kicked in such frenzy at having been touched that the memory of him has always been a vivid one in my mind. . . . Never in present times has a horse been mismanaged so as to become such a savage as Vatican then was. They had actually gone to the length of having him blinded by a vet. from Thirsk ; but so absolutely did he establish his reign of terror that they destroyed him in 1859.

Mr. William Allison's memory had evidently not retained the correct location of Vatican, for by the time the shocking operation was performed upon him it had been found impossible to keep the horse either in a stall or loose box of ordinary size. Even when alone—and he was a thousand times worse when visited in his stable—he screamed and kicked till he reduced woodwork to splinters and made holes big enough for a man to wheel a barrow through the brick walls. So Stebbing went to the expense of having a special box of extraordinary size built for him, away from all the other horses, and in the wood which stretched in those days from the top of Sutton Bank nearly to the Hambleton Hotel. That isolated box is still standing, and in my day at the Hambleton training quarters, twenty years ago, was used by Lord Hawke, Prince 'Ranji,' and others of the shooting syndicate as a game larder. In Vatican's day as tenant chains were fixed to rings (still remaining) in each corner of the

box, and with these Vatican was secured to be dressed over and when his box was being cleaned out—an operation not frequently attempted ! Prior to this precaution being taken the demoniacal son of Venison had done serious injury to three or four lads who had had the temerity to 'do him,' or had, under compulsion, looked after him. One he had picked up, shaken like a rat, and then knelt on. The ear of another he had torn clean away ; the thumb of a third he had bitten off, and others he had mauled and terrified.

Someone suggested to Stebbing that there was nothing like the companionship of an ass to quieten a mad-brained savage horse, so the Hambleton trainer took an early opportunity of buying one from some gipsies, who happened to be camped near Thirsk. The unfortunate donkey was turned into the box with the wild lion of a horse, but far from having any pacific influence upon Vatican the presence of the stranger-had obviously aroused the worst in him, and next morning the donkey was found dead in a corner, disembowelled and almost decapitated.

It was at this very time that Stebbing took into his employ (conditionally upon his looking after Vatican and assisting with the service of mares which came to him), a certain Albert Danzy Barker, a local lad, who had recently been married at Cold Kirby Church, in whose register he is described as a 'training groom.' By some mysterious mesmeric means he ingratiated himself with Vatican and soon was able to do anything with him, though he was the same old roaring lion, with ears back and whites of eyes showing, when anyone else went near him. As an instance of the affection, understanding, or whatever it was between this Yorkshire Rarey and his charge, it is told how on the Christmas Eve after his appointment, Barker stayed very late at the Dialstone Inn, and, finding Stebbing's house locked up for the night, he let himself into Vatican's box and slept peacefully and unharmed under the manger all night. 'I would not have done such a thing if they had offered me all Hambleton, and all the money in the Bank of England,' said Stebbing—and I don't suppose anyone else who knew Vatican would either, saving only Albert Barker !

Eventually Barker, who seems to have been of a roving, harum-scarum temperament, enlisted and went abroad. He took with him the secret of his conquest over Vatican, and though one or two other men experienced with stallions were engaged, they soon threw up the post, one of them compulsorily through a broken arm and some fractured ribs, due to Vatican's vagaries. It is said that these men tried to terrorise the terror, to subdue the animal by beating him whilst chained up from each corner of his box, by throwing him to the ground and endeavouring to make him feel the humility of being conquered and impotent. All this was but a repetition of a system previously tried without avail—cruelty which had only served to make Vatican more vicious and intolerant of mankind.

It was then that Stebbing conceived the diabolical idea, or adopted the fiendish suggestion made by someone else, to have Vatican blinded. So Holmes, the Thirsk vet., was sent for to perform the operation. The whole of Stebbing's staff was requisitioned; Vatican's legs were drawn from under him, and as soon as he fell on the straw in his box, two men sat on his head and wads of chloroform-soaked cottonwool were pressed over his nostrils till for once the savage was tamed for the nonce. With heated irons Holmes then performed one of the cruellest operations to which a racehorse was ever subjected. He burned out both Vatican's eyes, so that when the poor brute regained consciousness, he was not only stone blind but in terrible agony and a ghastly spectacle to look upon.

Worse than ever to deal with, owners were afraid to send their mares to him, and in 1859 he was put down. His end was an undignified one, for he was shot by Jim Humphrey of Kilburn, a well-known local character, who affected the dress of a highwayman, and was invariably followed by a number of black retriever dogs. Humphrey was a dog fancier and dog breaker, and would buy anything from sheep skins to gamecocks. Horses he bought for the value of their hides and offal, using the flesh to feed his pack. Vatican's poor maltreated body went on his flat cart down Kilburn Bank and with him went the massive head-collar and muzzle,

which is said to have weighed four stones. 'Take that away out of my sight,' said Stebbing, 'I'm sure we shall never want it again, or have such another horse to use it on.' Years after (in 1886) General Owen Williams had another Vatican (by Peter, out of Bella, by Breadalbane).

Perhaps one of the most thrilling experiences anyone connected with the Turf ever had with a demented racehorse was that which befel Harry Taylor, who until recent years was well known on the northern circuit as a successful steeple-chase jockey. It was at the very outset of his career that he had a veritable ride for his life with an equine savage in hot pursuit. Some time ago Taylor gave me a full and graphic description of the incident, and I cannot do better than tell it in his own words :

'When I was with Mr. T. Jennings, at Lagrange House, Newmarket, as an apprentice, I "did" a little chestnut mare called Valentine, on which the Hon. George Lambton later won several races under National Hunt Rules. She was by Kingcraft out of Etolia and belonged to Mr. Jennings. Well, one morning a lot of us were told to come six furlongs sharp, and just when we had pulled up, a black stallion called Cyril threw his lad and came as straight as a die for me, with his ears back, the whites of his eyes showing and his mouth wide open. Altogether he looked a very terrifying spectacle. My mare was as much afraid as I was, and taking the bit in her teeth, shot off like lightning. I tried to steady her so that I might pull up at the bottom of the Limekilns, but when I got there if I *could* have done so, I don't think I should, for the black stallion was close up, snorting and screaming, with lust and rage. There was nothing in front of us but the hard road, so on to it we went, past Jimmy Jewitt's, Bedford Lodge, Gurry's, and on to Blanton's place. If anything we seemed to be going faster as we left Green Lodge behind, and I don't think anyone went round Judge Clark's corner with more speed, less to spare, and with their heart more in their mouth than I—only a feather-weight, and the height of six-penn'oth of copper—did that memorable morning. I had a stone wall at each side of me and very little room to turn on to the main road again.

‘ However, we managed to get round somehow—all three of us ! How I prayed that that black stallion, with eyes now bloodshot and mouth foaming, would slip up ! But he *didn’t*, and still the hunt continued, in front of Waugh’s, and then in a bee-line for home. What a film it would have made for the pictures ! And what an alarming experience for a young lad just learning the art of jockeyship ! Cyril’s bulging eyes, open mouth, and blood-red nostrils haunted me not only through our three mile race, but long after.

‘ One of our men had been left in and he heard the sound of galloping hoofs, so ran to the gates suspecting something was wrong. Happily he took in the situation at a glance, yelled to me to pull up, and ran towards me. He saw I was so tired that I could hardly stand, and that the stallion was coming for one or the other of us meaning business. As it happened he dashed in between us and took the reins clean out of my hands, thus freeing the mare, who straightway galloped into her own yard, the gates leading into which the man was able to close, thus barring the progress of Cyril, who screamed and tore up the ground with his fore-feet like an enraged bull. I was beat to the world, and before I had fairly got my breath, Mr. Jennings arrived post haste into the yard, jumped off his hack, and, without asking any questions, gave me the soundest thrashing I ever had in my life for galloping a racehorse on the hard road ! I wonder what anyone else under the circumstances would have done ! I thought it was adding insult to injury, but in those days apprentices were ruled with a rod of ash, if not of iron.’

Peculiarly enough, Harry Taylor’s younger brother, also a cross-country jockey in his day, had an equally unpleasant and almost as terrifying an experience whilst it lasted, about twenty years later. He was riding a horse called Sea Lawyer, trained by Capt. J. R. Renwick, who had just gone to White-wall, Malton. Sea Lawyer by some means managed to unship Taylor on Langton Wold, and having done so, went down on his knees to worry his now prostrate rider. If assistance had not been at hand Taylor would probably not be alive to tell the tale. As it is he bears the marks on his arm to this day, as most jockeys now riding know for themselves, for he is a

much liked jockey's valet these times, travelling the meetings on the whole of the northern circuit.

He is not the only one who has been 'savaged' in this way, though horses have to be beside themselves with rage before they go down on their knees to attack a fallen rider. Only once have I personally seen this done, and on that occasion the demented horse actually knelt on the lad. He was a bit of a butcher on a horse, and seemed to have a grudge against any animal he had to ride or 'do.' He always spoke to them as though they were hardened criminals beyond redemption, frequently 'jagged' horses in the mouth when riding them with a villainous expression on his face as he did so, and was altogether one of that type which would revel in an inquisition. Well, horses have long memories both for people and places which have pleased them and places and people with whom they associate ill-treatment and unpleasantness. When they have an opportunity to 'get a bit of their own back' on the latter they avail themselves of it, even though it may be long afterwards.

It was so in the case of Fred Archer and Muley Edris, but that story will come later. Let me now quote a very early instance of a horse kneeling the better to attack a poor lad, who was possibly already unconscious and practically dead. The following paragraph appeared in the *London Chronicle* of July 1770 :

Last Tuesday a colt of Lord Grosvenor's threw Joseph Parsons, one of his lordship's stable boys, who was giving him exercise upon Westwell Down, near Burford ; when the lad's foot hung in the stirrup, and he was dragged till he received such wounds and bruises as occasioned his death in about two hours. On Thursday an inquest was held by the coroner, when it appeared the colt was so much enraged that he twice dropped upon his knees in order to seize the boy with his teeth but could not reach him. The colt was forfeited as a deodand to the lord of the manor, who accepted the horse of right, but politely returned him to the groom for his lordship.

There was an old law (not abolished till Sept. 1st, 1846) to the effect that an article—such as a ladder—or animal, which was the cause of the death of a human being, became

*ipso facto* 'deo-dandum'—*i.e.* a gift to God. The money realised was expended over masses for the soul of the departed. In some places, however, I believe the lord of the manor had the right of claiming the chattel or animal. Often the latter was destroyed.

From time immemorial one of three courses has been adopted to endeavour to restore ill-tempered, dangerous, man-eating horses to a more amiable state of mind and conduct.

- (1) Gentleness, patience, and kindness on the part of an attendant who is confident of his own horsemanship, and is not nervous.
- (2) Severity to gain the upper hand and make the horse feel and acknowledge it is conquered.
- (3) Partial starvation, so that the horse is reduced to such a state of weakness that his courage and high mettle are so reduced that he is tractable.

The Hon. George Lambton once tried the third plan with a horse called Pan, and his deduction is interesting. He says :

'He showed so much temper that I took him out of training and put him into my hunting stable, where we fairly set about him, but I do not think I should ever have conquered him if I had not starved him. However, in the end he became a glorious jumper over any sort of fence. I then sold him to Sir Charles Hartopp. . . . The career of Pan taught me something. If you have to resort to starvation to conquer a horse, when you have succeeded you have also broken his heart.

By this Mr. Lambton means the spirit and courage of the animal has been so crushed and demoralised that the very essential dash and 'heart,' which make for the winning of races, have been destroyed. Such a state is not necessarily the outcome of a battle for mastery between man and horse. Some horses are naturally 'funky' or lacking in courage, declining to 'put it all in' (*i.e.* reproduce their home form on a race-course). Such are rarely ever savage and are often even inaccurately described as 'rogues.' It is simply a matter of nerves—an analogous case to the clever student 'who knows it all,' but is quite stupid and unable to prove

his ability when he appears before examiners. Other horses become 'stale,' that is to say, they are weary of the nervous strain of racing and all the travelling it entails, and so are lacking in dash, or what John Jorrocks described as 'enterprize.' My own opinion is that as every horse is an individual study there is no stereotyped line of action which can be laid down to treat savages, 'thieves,' and rogues as a whole. Frequently it is only some particular individual whose presence rouses seven devils in an animal of the former class whose memories of that individual are, for some good reason, not pleasant.

This was the case with Admiral Harcourt's Ellerdale, the dam of Ellington. Tom Dawson had her in training, and years after she had gone to stud she recognised either his voice, or winded him, and rushed towards him with such fury that he had to beat a hasty retreat from the paddock in which she was running. This occurred more than once, thus again illustrating that some horses never forget or forgive an injury or grievance.

'The Druid' also tells us how Sir James Boswell's horse, General Chassé, was so whipped and spurred by the jockey Jack Holmes, that his temper was entirely ruined. When he went to perform his duties at stud he was by no means easy to deal with. The Hon. F. Lawley once expressed the opinion that :

'Many cases of ferocious sires and equally ferocious mares may be partially accounted for by the tremendous punishment again and again inflicted upon them when running races. Far more difficult to explain are the circumstances and conditions of the violence exhibited by the Duke of Westminster's Orme, who was regarded by his experienced owner as the most valuable stallion in the world.'

Regarding Orme's sudden change of temper, the Hon. Cecil Parker (the Duke's nephew) wrote as follows at the time :

'For some months past Orme, who had previously been as quiet and gentle as an old sheep, has been showing temper when out at exercise. In fact his temper has recently been growing worse and worse, and the climax was reached on the first Monday



in April (1897) when at exercise, he became quite unmanageable. Upon any attempt to bridle him, or put on his tackle, his vicious temper speedily displayed itself.'

As the result of the danger of handling the famous sire he was not allowed to continue his stud duties that season, 'it being believed that to do so would be attended with very great danger both to the men and the mares.'

Another stallion—Mr. Padwick's Eclipse (by Orlando)—went to America, and there became such a dangerous demon that he had to be fed from the roof and through holes he had kicked in the walls of his box. This plan was adopted after he had killed two or three negro grooms and maimed several others who ventured to approach him. Mares were sent unattended into his yard, and to these matrons of his harem Eclipse was as gentle as a courtier. For years neither he, his box, nor his yard could be cleaned out, and there he remained like a caged lion, in filth. He got some useful stock nevertheless.

Phlegon was another racehorse which, on being retired to stud duties, developed a vicious temperament, and 'The Druid' paints a word picture of him standing gnashing his teeth in a most bellicose manner when strangers went to the Marquess of Exeter's stud to see him. This reminds me of a story of Mr. John Brown, an ex-amateur cross-country rider, and now a well-known Yorkshire hunter dealer. He went to Middleham to see three prospective sires whose racing career was just ended, and from which trio he thought he might select one like getting hunters. No. 1 came for him open-mouthed; No. 2 screamed and kicked as soon as his box door was opened, and he was advised not to go up to No. 3 as he had his ears back and altogether did not conceal his dislike to visits from strangers. When he had completed his tour Mr. Brown said to the trainer: 'Mr. ———, you're evidently not clear as to what I want. I'm looking for a stallion to get hunters—*not a lion!*'

I have referred to the long memory of horses, to their unforgiving temperament, and their marked dislike to certain individuals, though quite tractable with others. The case of Fred Archer and Muley Edris was casually mentioned in this

connection. The details are briefly as follows : Fred Archer had ridden Muley Edris (a chestnut colt by Wild Moor, out of Retty, and then owned by Mr. A. Egerton) and had given him a sound rib-roasting to waken him up. Muley both resented and remembered, and one morning, shortly before the Derby, Fred was riding some exercise gallops at Newmarket, and Muley spotting him, came for him and seized hold to such purpose that the muscles of the great jockey's arm were so torn and the flesh so lacerated, that it seemed unlikely he would be able to ride Bend Or in the Derby, according to an engagement of long standing. However, an appliance was speedily made which supported the injured muscles and made it possible for Archer to take the mount, though another result of Muley's attack was that Archer, being unable to ride and take his accustomed exercise for some days, rapidly put on weight, and four days prior to the Derby was 14 lbs. heavier than he would have to be on the great day at Epsom. To overcome this disability he began to waste hard and had a saddle specially made, weighing only 1 lb. complete. Bend Or just won the Derby from Robert the Devil. Incidentally Muley Edris either died or was put down the same year.

Not a few racehorses which have developed a temper, or have had savagery bred in the bone, have been responsible for the deaths of those who have ridden them or attended to them. Merlin, when he was being painted by the famous animal painter Herring, had to be chained up for safety—a necessary precaution, seeing that this horse subsequently killed his groom.

Mundig, who won the Derby of 1835, also attacked and killed a man, and for some time afterwards was like a wild carnivorous animal which has tasted blood for the first time and has all his wildest and cruellest passions awakened to the full.

I have already recorded instances of horses which actually knelt on those they had attacked, the better to carry out their murderous intent. Jem Robinson, a famous jockey in his day, had an unpleasant experience of this kind with Ardrossan. He was to ride the horse in a trial and was walking round him in his box to see that all his tackle was

in order, when Ardrossan dashed at him like a cat springing on a mouse, threw him into a corner and then knelt on him. Fortunately his owner, Lord Exeter, and Lord Foley, who were to watch the trial and were in the stable-yard waiting to mount their hacks, heard Jem's cries for assistance and got the infuriated horse away. The story runs that Robinson 'took it out of him' when he got on to his back, which vengeance, rather than creating a penitent and contrite heart or broken spirit, only served to make Ardrossan more upset and spiteful than ever. He did his best to pull the jockey out of the saddle, didn't show his true form in his trial, and on returning to his stable was handed over to the boy who looked after him and with whom he had normally been well-behaved. Determined to be revenged upon *someone*, and Robinson (not anxious for another interview) having speedily disappeared, Ardrossan picked up his regular attendant, threw him into the manger, mauled him there and bit a thumb off before some of the other stablemen came to his assistance and rescued him.

As another instance of the long memory of horses it may be mentioned that two years later when Jem Robinson went to Lord Exeter's place at Burleigh, he was assured that Ardrossan was now 'as well behaved as a christian and had no more vice in him than a kitten.' So Robinson went to renew his acquaintance with the horse at stable-time. 'The quiet christian' was racked up and was standing as quiet as a sheep as his lad was thumping him with a hay wisp. Despite the thumping and the lad's hissing Ardrossan heard Robinson's voice, or winded him, and straightway flew into an uncontrollable rage, smashed his head-collar in his frenzied endeavour to get to his enemy of a year ago, and then made direct for the old jockey who, with Lord Exeter, dashed for the saddle-room and banged the door as quickly as they could. Outside stood the snorting, head and tail erect Ardrossan, a very fine picture of beauty and rage for an artist, but not in a fit state to be interviewed by those whom he disliked.

Ardrossan passed on some of his bad manners to at least one descendant—Strathconan. Strathconan was by New-

minster, who was by Touchstone and out of the famous Bee'swing ('The adopted daughter of Northumberland') whose dam was by Ardrossan. The late Mr. 'Teddy' Roper of Richmond used to tell<sup>1</sup> the following exciting experiences in which Brandy Wine (by the Cure), Ameer, and Strathconan were the main actors, and of which the narrator was an eye-witness :

'People pay a great deal to see sensations nowadays, and we read of bull-fighting at Madrid and so on, but I saw a sight on Richmond Moor far in front of anything of that sort and for nothing at all. There was a horse called Brandy Wine, trained by Robinson. He was a fiend horse, a perfect devil. A friend named Bradley and I were out watching the horses at work. Brandy Wine was such a bad devil that he came out to gallop by himself. We were standing about fifty yards away from a wall, in which, luckily there was a gate. As he got opposite to us, about sixty yards off, he bucked, and his jockey came off. The boy crept into a gorse bush on his hands and knees as fast as he could. The horse looked round to see what he could go for, and spotting Bradley and myself came for us as hard as he could gallop. We ran for the gate in the wall (I could have won a Sheffield Handicap easily that time from scratch). We slammed the gate to after us, and luckily it held. We crouched under the wall and we saw him rearing up against the wall and looking over, as much as to say : "Where are they?" Then he turned and saw a string of horses trained by Elliott coming up the gallops. He immediately went for the first horse, an animal called Ameer, whose jockey threw himself off and also crept into a gorse bush. And then the two stallions set to work. It reminded one of the pictures you see of those two Arabian horses fighting for the mare, you know. They kicked, reared up, and kicked with their hind legs, fought with their fore-legs, tore with their teeth, and shrieked and yelled like two human beings. It was a magnificent sight ! I shall never forget it. Then stablemen came running along with sticks and things to beat them off, which they eventually did, but Ameer's fore-leg was broken, and he had to be

<sup>1</sup> See *A Sportsman's Memories*, by Edward Roper.

destroyed. But he got Brandy Wine with his teeth behind the ears and tore off the skin down to his withers, there being nearly two-and-a-half feet of skin hanging down. He was also otherwise knocked about. He recovered ; he was a good horse and they took a good deal of care with him, but about two years afterwards he got loose in his stable at night and killed a horse next to him. Then they thought it was time he was put away, and they shot him. I also saw that great horse Strathconan—he was placed in the Leger—throw his jockey and get loose on Richmond Moor. Every creature, animal and horseman, got off that moor quicker than anything I ever saw, and Strathconan was left in sole possession. He was captured in about an hour, and did no harm, but it was a fine sight to see him galloping about seeking whom to devour.’

I may add to Mr. Roper’s *Sporting Memories* that Strathconan ran in both the Derby and Leger of 1866 but was *not* placed. He too, transmitted the vicious temper he had inherited to his son Cairngorm (out of Emerald) ; indeed Cairngorm died fighting. When in training with ‘ Paddy ’ Drislane, at Middleham, he got loose, and he and another stallion fought till they made such mincemeat of each other that both had to be destroyed. Cairngorm at that time belonged to Tom Devereux, and Drislane told him that he saw the stallions on their hind legs, screaming and attacking each other ; and, do what he would, he could not separate them. As a two-year-old Cairngorm, in 1878, ran as Sir George Chetwynd’s, his first outing being in the Brocklesby Stakes at Lincoln. He was unplaced, and F. Webb, the jockey, was reprimanded for misconduct at the post. At Epsom he was made favourite for the Westminster Stakes, and ridden by T. Cannon, but was again unplaced. George Fordham was third on him at Bath, and his only win as a two-year-old was at Epsom. He then passed to Mr. F. Gretton, and won two races as a three-year-old, the first being a Selling at Shrewsbury, where Mr. Humphreys bought him. Fred Archer rode him a few days later at Warwick, where he was favourite, won, and was bought in for 300 guineas. After winning a seller in November at Manchester,

Tom Green bought him for 200 guineas, and a very cheap bargain he proved, for in 1881 he won at Durham, the Glasgow Plate at York, City Welter at Manchester, Westwood Plate at Beverley, a private sweepstakes at Haydock, and his seventh race at Halifax. By this time he had become the property of the veteran Tom Devereux, who had claimed him out of a selling race at Thirsk. I refer to Cairngorm again in a later chapter (p. 189).

Reverting to the question of the long memory horses have for those against whom they harbour a grievance, the late Matthew Dawson (who had so many famous racers through his hands during his long experience as a trainer), once said : 'Horses are like elephants, inasmuch as they never forget an injury. Treat them well and they will show their appreciation, but once arouse hatred and, as a rule, it is ineffaceable.' Sometimes harsh treatment only arouses resentment against the perpetrator, sometimes it sours a horse and makes it useless for future racing, just as flogging at school makes some boys stubborn and decline to work so long as they are under the master who has thrashed them. Especially is this the case in horse or boy when a feeling of injustice is associated with punishment.

That good horse Lottery (by Tramp out of Mandane), bred by Squire R. Watt, of Bishop Burton, is an example of how a horse's temper may be ruined for ever. Lottery was originally named Tinker, and made his first Turf appearance in the St. Leger of 1823. He was never a very amiable or generous horse from his earliest days. John Jackson rode him in the Yorkshire classic and gave him a few 'reminders' on the way to the post in a year historic because of the false start. Returning to Bishop Burton the horse's temper gradually got worse, and he soon became really vicious, the culminating point of his evil manners showing itself one morning after leaving the stable with the other horses for the usual routine of exercise in the park adjoining the hall. As a protest against being daily cantered or galloped and against being controlled by mankind in general, he suddenly turned his head round, seized his rider by the leg, pulled him clean out of the saddle, shook him as a dog does a rat, did his best to

break his bones with his fore-feet, then left the lad lying on the ground, galloped off for his home stable, and, finding the yard doors closed, jumped over them and ran amok. It was with some difficulty that he was secured, and his owner forthwith determined to be rid of him lest he killed one of his men and taught all the other horses at Bishop Burton his own evil tricks.

Several to whom Mr. Watt offered the savage as a gift declined to accept him, owing to (probably exaggerated) stories which had spread regarding Tinker's ferocity. Amongst 'horsey' men nothing travels quicker than a horse's bad character, and it seems to have always been the case that each one 'crabs' such animals a little more. Nevertheless, Tinker had undoubtedly earned a certain amount of his reputation. This did not deter Mr. Whittaker from coming along and offering Mr. Watt £400 for the horse. The bid was readily accepted, and Tinker was sent to a local 'coper' and 'breaker' named John Garbutt, who promised to re-break and tame the 'wild animal,' even though he was killed in the attempt. Garbutt was one of those fearless men who used to be found in most parts of Yorkshire and other counties, who had such confidence in their own powers that they would 'have a go' when others had failed with man-eating horses. The day on which Garbutt was to commence Tinker's education became known and quite a crowd of Yorkshire sportsmen gathered to witness the contest, fully expecting to see the horse-breaker mangled or torn to ribbons.

Before attempting to do anything else Garbutt mounted the savage, with all quietness and many soothing words, in a big ploughed field, and at once set him into a gallop in the heavy going. Tinker soon began to sob and lob in the holding clay, not having done any work for some time. His rider, however, kept him at it till Tinker lay down with exhaustion and 'roared like a bull' in his fury at being thus completely beaten and impotent when he possibly thought he had been running away with his rider. In his case the spirit-breaking process was successful, he went back into training, and beat eight cracks for the Doncaster Cup, for which race he started favourite. Amongst his opponents

were Mr. Lambton's Cedric (which had won the Derby the previous year, 1824) and Figaro, ridden by Sam Chifney.

Cruiser was another horse with a black history which he made a little later on. He had only one experience of a race-course, being beaten a neck in 1854 for the Criterion Stakes. The following year he stood as a sire at the Rawcliff Stud, York. 'The Druid' informs us that John Day warned the man who came to take him to his new sphere of activities in Yorkshire not to remove his head-collar in the stable, and suggests that they had already had trouble with him at Danebury. They soon found out at York that Cruiser had a temper, and though they battled on with him for a couple of years, they eventually had to send for Rarey, who had gained considerable renown as a horse tamer. His efforts were successful, for Rarey got the horse so much in subjection that he would lie down on the command to 'die,' and readily obey other orders.

In his reminiscences the late Mr. Arthur Yates says : ' People have often asked me to tell them about any horse of a " peculiar " temperament which I may have owned. Tambour Major, which caused twenty-seven false starts in Macaroni's Derby, was, as you may guess, a pretty sulky brute, and so was Yorkshire Grey, but the worst horse that I ever had at Bishop's Sutton was Gay Hampton. For a few days after his arrival he was well behaved, but as soon as he became " acclimatised " he began to show his true character. He gave us a taste of his " playfulness " by pushing my jockey Guy down in the stall, kneeling on his chest and trying to savage him. It was only by main force and the use of a long whip that I was able to rescue poor Guy from serious injury. Out on the gallops Gay Hampton was always trying to dislodge his rider preparatory to treating him in a similar manner. I had a hole bored in the side of the horse's box and a rein attached to his head-collar. The rein was passed through the hole into the next box, so that when anyone went to attend to Gay Hampton, the rein was first pulled tight and his head was drawn close to the wall. He was thus unable to use his very dangerous teeth on the stable lad. Eventually I became tired of the animal, and as my friend



Mr. Ripley expressed a desire to have Gay Hampton, I willingly made him a present of him. Mr. Ripley rode him on the road, when the horse fell, broke his knees, and was promptly shot. I do not think that there was a lad in my stable who did not feel a certain amount of glee at Gay Hampton's death. He was a dark bay, and an own brother to Merry Hampton, the horse which, at his first outing on a race-course, won the Derby of 1887 for Mr. Abington Baird.'

There are those who are inclined to disparage the skill of the late Prof. Loeffler, both as an equine dentist and as a man gifted with a remarkable power over horses. They are in the minority, and many are the stories told by those best able to judge, of his wonderful operations upon horses as well as of his almost magical influence over nasty tempered animals which others found both difficult and dangerous to handle. Several of the old school of trainers have spoken to me of the 'mysterious way' Loeffler had with horses which were either mad with pain from their teeth, or which were to all intents and purposes equine lunatics, so ungovernable that had they been human beings they would have been 'put inside' as a danger to themselves and the community. Peculiarly enough he, poor fellow, ended his days in an asylum—sent there by worry over the Orme affair—the supposed poisoning of that great horse, in which scandal he never believed. A writer in 1912, dealing with horses' teeth and racehorse bits, rightly said that Loeffler could do what he liked with the most savage horse. He continued :

'A tongue-stroker they called him. I have seen him pull out a tooth without assistance or instruments. He just told the animal to open its mouth, put in his hand, located the tooth, and brought it out between his finger and thumb. His most wonderful achievement was with Barcaldine after that horse had turned a man-eater, and used to savage every jockey or stable-lad that came near him. Loeffler started by giving the horse a boxing-glove to shake in his mouth. Then he played with it, and gradually got hold of the animal's ears. He was never afraid of a horse ; his influence was not only soothing, it was masterful. Walton, the American plunger, had a mare Giroflé that no one could do anything with. Loeffler found she had teeth trouble,

and, after he had given her relief, she used to follow him about like a pet lamb. If I remember rightly, she won several races, but would never start unless he accompanied her to the post.'

The veteran, and still hale and hearty, William I'Anson, told me a similar story regarding a conquest Leoffler made at Malton in the days when the said William had a very big string and was a power to reckon with in the Turf world. It was in 1880: Madame Du Barry—a big bay mare by Favonius—Strategy—came over from Ireland to I'Anson's at Highfield. She proved a problem from the outset, but let I'Anson tell his own story:

'She walked round and round her box, just like you see a hyena at a zoo. Day and night she kept at it, till her hocks were red raw with knocking them against the box corners as she turned on her everlasting sentry-go. She went to a complete skeleton with fretting and never resting. I thought I would try if company would make her settle and eat, so put her into a two-stalled stable, in which there was another mare, and tied her up—a risky thing to do with a blood 'un which had never been racked up before except to dress over. However I only put a neck-strap on her, and had the rope shank well greased. A boy called Hammond sat up with her, and for the first time for days she lay down early in the morning. After this she began to eat and rest, when she heard and smelled the other mare. She was always funny tempered, however, and still didn't seem to 'come on,' so I suspected it was another case of teeth trouble, of which my father had had so much and such harassing experience with some of his horses. So I got Professor Loeffler, then the great authority on equine dentition, to come and look at her mouth. As Madame was very handy with her fore-feet and struck out like a boxer, I cautioned him to be on the watch. He had a wonderful way with horses, and went up to her quite boldly, without fear or hesitation. "This mare is a very hard puller," he said as soon as he opened her mouth. "You're quite right," I agreed. He then explained that the "dents" in her teeth told him that. "Give me your hand and feel," said Loeffler. "Not for all Malton," I replied, "I've seen her boxing, you *haven't*, and I'm safer down here."

He told me there was nothing much wrong with her teeth and began pulling her head about in such a way that I was sure he'd be a mangled corpse any minute. I had to leave him and shortly afterwards my head man, Harding, came running to me and said ; " Just come and look at this tooth specialist chap ! I'm completely capped with him." So I went back and there found Loeffler sitting down with the mare turned round in the stall and standing as quiet as a lamb letting him rasp her teeth as though she was enjoying it—perhaps she was ! After winning the Great Northern at York she won the Goodwood Cup in a canter by twenty lengths. At York a party of racing men from Ireland were deeply interested in Madame Du Barry when I was saddling her and could hardly believe she was the same mare, she had grown out so and was apparently so docile. They told me she was always " a skin " in Ireland and a " notorious mare."

Continuing his chat with me about savage horses William I'Anson said : ' Pursebearer was the only real savage I had during all the years I was training, though I've bought a few reputed man-eaters—Pierrepont, for instance. They couldn't do anything with him at Newmarket, but he came all right with me.'

William I'Anson's father, however, bred an historic savage in Broomielaw (by Stockwell out of his Queen Mary). The late Viscount Chaplin started his racing career by purchasing Breadalbane and Broomielaw from William I'Anson senior for £11,500. Harry Custance rode these two horses in nearly, if not all, their races. Broomielaw began his year by winning the Dee Stakes at Chester, and in this event gave an exhibition of savage temper which has been displayed in a similar manner under the same circumstances by many other horses in their races. Custance's mount came up alongside Mr. Moorhead's Breffni when they'd gone half-way, and seized hold of him. Johnny Osborne, who was riding his father's King Arthur in the race, often used to talk about this, and told me how Broomielaw after winning kicked all the railings down going into the paddock. He also gave quite a circus performance both before and after winning the

Cup at Goodwood, going down on his knees at the start to tear up the grass in his anger, and entering the paddock on his hind legs after he'd won. Poor 'Cus' never quite knew what tricks Broomielaw would be up to next, and in his *Recollections* has something to say regarding the horse's temper. Here is an extract :

' I rode him and won the Craven Stakes the first day at Goodwood on the same course that he had run over the last afternoon for the Chesterfield Cup. He had been there a day or two before, and Bloss, Mr. Chaplin's trainer, had always taken him to the same post to start his gallop, so he knew it too well. I thought I should have some trouble with him, so asked Mr. Chaplin to get the consent of the stewards for me not to canter up.

' I got weighed out early, and walked nearly to the Craven post, which is one and a quarter miles away. Just before I reached it I took off my coat, and Broomielaw, who had been led along as quiet as possible, turned like a mad bull, and came at me open-mouthed. I had to dodge him quick, and, as a last resource said, " Put my coat over his head."

' It was a frightfully hot day, and he had no clothing on, so we had nothing else to blindfold him with. They put my coat over his eyes, and threw me up as quickly as possible. The moment they removed the coat he started bucking, rearing, and kicking, trying his utmost to get rid of me. He got his head down the hill and went into the furze bushes, and nearly into the cornfield at the bottom.

' I tried to get the assistant starter (he had lived with Bloss as helper during the winter) to come and lead him back ; but he knew Broomielaw's little playful ways, such as biting off a man's thumb, so declined to have anything to do with him. The horse was very self-willed, and there we were for half-an-hour. Eventually I had my fight out with him, and after going down on his knees, worrying the ground, and doing everything he could, I had fairly beaten him, when he " donkeyed," or turned stubborn, and I could not move him. At last the starter called out, " I can't wait any longer for you, Custance." I begged him to send his man to me, which he did. I said to him, " Hit him as hard as you pos-

sibly can below the hocks, and then crack your whip." He did so, and off went Broomielaw, happily in the right direction. M'George dropped his flag to a very good start. . . . I won in a canter by two lengths.

' This was Broomielaw's last race. They couldn't get him to Brighton the next week, where he was in the Champagne Stakes, a race he couldn't have lost ; but he kicked both the back of the horse-van and the horse-box out, injuring himself so badly that he never ran again. This savage but smart horse was afterwards bought by Sir John Astley, who, I believe, could do no more with him than anyone else. He was not a success at stud, as he transmitted his bad temper to most of his progeny—Trent to wit.'

Some years ago (1923) Mr. Andrew Knowles, whilst riding Dumfries in a race (the Chorlton Hurdle) at Manchester, was savaged by Envoy and bitten on the leg ; whilst at Tarporley in March 1926 Mr. R. Blake's mount, Obelisk, seized him by his foot and made his teeth meet. A couple of years ago (August 1924 to be specific), Stocks Cuthbert, Mr. College Leader's head man, was leading a four year old French horse called Roi Salomon on Newmarket Heath, and stooping, pulled a handful of grass. Roi Salomon ungraciously seized the hand which offered the green stuff and held it fast. Mr. Leader rode up and got the horse to liberate Cuthbert, but not till one finger had been bitten off and others so mauled that he had to go into hospital. Jacquot played a similar trick on D. Taylor in 1926, though fortunately he did not lose a finger, and A. Waudby had a hand mauled a couple of years or so earlier by Carpathus, when he was in training at Peacock's at Middleham.

Mr. P. P. Gilpin tells a graphic story of a horse fight on the edge of the Limekiln at Newmarket some years ago. The combatants were the property of Lord Wavertree (then Col. Hall Walker), and had got rid of their lads. They were, says Mr. Gilpin, ' fighting like a lot of terriers—three or four of them down on their knees, attacking each other with their teeth and heels, fighting tooth and nail in fact—really meaning to hurt, and it was rather a terrifying spectacle. I know that the trainer who had them at the time took care to be

armed with a stick or a broom handle before he went into their boxes to see them, one of them especially. I believe they were by the now defunct Royal Realm, who would have, no doubt, been a very successful sire, but for his unfortunate habit of transmitting his bad temper to so many of his progeny.'

Mr. Gilpin also wrote the following reminiscence in 1923 : 'I had a horse called Skikaree, who became very bad-tempered quite suddenly and, so far as I know, absolutely without any cause whatever, and on one occasion I remember him throwing his boy off and going for him open-mouthed while on the ground. It was fortunate for the lad that I was only a few yards off and immediately proceeded to his assistance and beat off his assailant. We could never trust that horse again, and I took the first opportunity of getting rid of him. Once a horse becomes savage he is rarely any good to anyone afterwards, and least of all on a race-course. I had no need to regret having parted with him as he never did any good.'

Mr. Gilpin's views do not quite coincide with the equally famous and equally experienced William I'Anson, to whom, as already stated, went a number of horses which had terrible reputations at Newmarket, but which became quite reformed characters under I'Anson's treatment, and amid the less exciting Wolds at Malton. Possibly the horses with black characters which I'Anson got were only nervy and not bred and born savages—it matters little which they are if a jockey or stable-lad is picked up and shaken or has a finger or ear torn off.

Although introducing an ass into the quarters which had to be specially built to accommodate the man-eating Vatican had not the prophesied effect of making him more amiable and more amenable, there are many savage, irritable, and hitherto unmanageable racehorses which have become quite altered characters through the pacifying influence—not quite understood—of the companionship of some other animal to which they have 'taken.' That famous mare Pretty Polly, of a most kindly and even temperament (except in regard to her own sister), was devoted to a pony called 'Little Missis,'

which always travelled with her to make her feel at home and to make her settle amid strange surroundings. One of her daughters, Polly Flinders, formed an equally close attachment to a goat. Polly, like Madame Du Barry, of whom I have already spoken, was most restless in her box, and fretted so much that she declined her food. Now the most experienced and most skilful trainer in the world cannot prepare horses for their engagements if they will not eat, and the oft-recurring question with regard to horses with tempers, or peculiar temperaments, is 'has he (or she) cleaned her manger up?' Well, when Polly Flinders went off her food she was introduced to the goat and during the remainder of her racing career was quite happy and contented so long as her strange companion was with her. The friendship was mutual too, and I remember seeing the pair, amongst other places, in the paddock at Pontefract—and how interested the Yorkshiremen were in the mascot.

Polly Flinders was by no means the first racehorse to strike up a close friendship with a goat. Prevoyant was another and more could be quoted. The late Mr. G. W. Smith's (George Drake's) True as Steel formed an affectionate alliance with the stable cat, which always went to race meetings when True As Steel ran. I have a snapshot of the old horse standing as quiet as a sheep with the whole of one of his friend's many families on his back and the now Doncaster trainer, Arthur Reader, holding the mother.

Red Hart by Venison (also sire of the famous savage Vatican), was what John Kent described<sup>1</sup> as 'very high-couraged'—it almost amounted to vice, a trait derived through the Partisan blood, Venison being a son of Partisan. Kent once wrote: 'Notwithstanding his high courage and impetuosity, Red Hart would submit to be clawed by a favourite cat without offering the least resistance. He was, indeed, as fond of his cat as a mare of her foal; and when Red Hart left the stable for the exercising ground the cat would remain contentedly at home until the time for the horses' return drew near, when he would take up his position at the door watching for his companion's approach. Red

<sup>1</sup> In *Baily's Magazine*.

Hart would be one of a string of perhaps fifty or sixty ; but away rushed the cat as soon as he saw his companion, and would jump up behind the boy, whilst his companion would greet him with a friendly neigh. It occasionally happened that while the cat was on the way to meet the horse, it would be chivied by some strange dog or other, and in the cat's anxiety to escape and get on Red Hart's back, it would strike its claws so deeply into the horse's thigh as to draw blood, yet the horse never flinched, but would watch for the approach of the dog, and when within reach of Red Hart's heels he would be in much greater danger than ever the cat had been.'

The cat accompanied Red Hart to race meetings as did True as Steel's feline friend, and as have done many other stable cats, the presence of which has proved a consoling sedative in strange stables in which some horses refuse to eat or rest, as they would possibly have done had their home companion not come with them.

The attachment to cats and dogs is common to all equine breeds, though most marked amongst the aristocrats of the equine world—yclept the thoroughbred. This is probably the outcome of the long enforced isolation and solitude race-horses are called upon to undergo—lonely prisoners for the greater part of most days in a loose box. When the great Lanercost was trained by I'Anson he had a constant friend in a dog, which slept in his stable and accompanied him wherever he went. When Lanercost was sold and was transferred to John Scott's establishment to be prepared for his future engagements, the dog fretted for his friend and by some means located him and was discovered in the horse's box at his new quarters.

When I lived at the historic Hambleton training quarters there was a greyhound and a terrier which were waiting for us each morning to go out with the first lot to do work. They knew the various gallops we used as well as we did, and when we went to what is known as 'the Roundhills,' from which we cantered in almost a semi-circle, the two dogs went the half mile or so in a bee-line and so, covering a shorter distance, were waiting for us when we pulled up not far from



the edge of a tremendous precipice—fenced off, of course. It was amusing to see the delight of these dogs at having beaten us and the fussy greeting they gave to the horses. The latter quite seemed to appreciate it, and put their noses down towards the excited, barking pair.

As against the affection which springs up between horses and other animals, some of us know of other racehorses (they are probably few) which have had as great an antipathy to cats as have terriers, and have attacked them with more fatal results. Though by no means a savage, a filly by Stefan the Great, out of Picotee, a couple of years ago killed a large rat in her box. She put her head down to smell her visitor, and, receiving a nip on the nose, retaliated, shook the rat, and threw it up in the air.

Mr. P. P. Gilpin has told us of a racehorse called Llan-gibby, which made friends with a young Brahmin bull. The little bull would run underneath him and stand with its head between his forelegs for protection when startled, and the horse took it all as a matter of course without any demur.

Chilblain, a brown colt by Jack Frost out of Grand Duchess, twice won the Grand Military as the mount of Captain 'Billy' Morris—known in his regiment (the 7th Hussars) as 'Billy Morgan.' Sir Claude de Crespigny describes Capt. Morris as 'the finest soldier jockey of his time. He rode more than once in the Grand National and was immensely popular amongst all racing men, amateur and professional alike.' He considered Chilblain and Downpatrick two of the best horses he ever rode, and before passing on to matters germane to our present subject, I may just mention (for a new generation has sprung up since it occurred), that Capt. Morris' death was surrounded by one of the most remarkable and unsolved mysteries in connection with crime or sport, fact or fiction. He was out hunting and was found lying dead with his collar and shirt undone, and the gold pin which had fastened his stock, stuck in his coat. Near at hand his horse was secured to a railing. Obviously *someone* had tied the horse, had taken off his stock, and opened his shirt, but whoever it was never came forward to volunteer any information as to what had happened, or just how much

they personally knew. Why? Was there something to conceal? Some imagined that he had been 'hustled' and left to an untimely end. His neck was broken but there was no sign of a fall—what happened, who saw it, who discovered after examination that the gallant horseman was dead, has never been known to this day and probably never will be now.

Chilblain ended his days at Champion Lodge, Sir Claude De Crespigny's place, and we are told in that great sportsman's *Sporting Memoirs* :

'He had a horse box, shed, and four acres of paddock, and a companion, for some time too, in the shape of a lamb. This animal followed Chilblain as faithfully as that of the poet did Mary, and a great affection sprang up between the two. Which-ever left the box first the other immediately followed and at the same pace. The horse and lamb grazed alongside of one another, and when the horse lay down the lamb followed suit.'

In some districts a goat is turned out with brood mares under the belief that this is an antidote to abortion, and also that it has a tendency to make mares settled and quiet amid strange surroundings.

When at the Croft Stud the stallion George Frederick was a notorious savage, and attacked all and sundry except Winteringham's dog. He showed signs of pleasure whenever the little terrier approached, but was enraged at the sight of any other dog and most human beings. George Frederick had rather a bad time of it owing to his temper, for many were the beatings he received in the attempts made to quieten him. He had had an eye knocked out during the course of one of these severe chastisements, which form of correction and attempt to break his spirit had only made him more and more vicious. Eventually his character for savagery became so well known that Mr. Hume Webster was able to buy him for £25. Mr. Spires, who looked after him subsequently for three years, tells me he never once hit him during all that period, and adds 'the man has never been born who *could* have hit him at that time if he was loose, and have got away with it, neither would there have been anything left of a man who had attempted to have him thrown or to sit on his head.'

John Griffiths, Lord Derby's stud-groom at Knowsley, in April 1915, told Mr. Edward Moorhouse<sup>1</sup> that when he left Marden Deer Park (where George Frederick stood after leaving Croft), Albert Gilbert had the supervising of the horse, whose temper grew worse and worse. He broke the arms of three men who went into his box to 'do' him on three successive days. The next man deputed to look after him left suddenly, and the horse's owner came down to the stud and said he'd 'never yet come across the horse he couldn't master.' He seized a stick and went into George Frederick's box roaring at him like a bull. All this 'frightfulness' had been tried by many others without avail, and the stallion soon had his owner out of the box. In 1896 George Frederick went to America and there died under chloroform.

George Frederick was by Marsyas, out of Princess of Wales by Stockwell, and, of course, won the Derby of 1874. As a youngster he had shown signs of bad temper, and in *The History and Romance of the Derby* we are told :

'As he became older his temper developed into something akin to madness. . . . There were always two men in his box when he had to be fed or done down.'

In an amusing old book called *The Horse and His Rider* (by Rollo Springfield), there is an engraving of 'A vicious race-horse,' which, minus saddle or bridle, is shaking a hefty Irishman whilst the prospective jockey, all ready to mount, stands by helplessly. This was Mr. Whaley's King Pepin, by Tug out of Mary Grey, bred in Ireland. The author mentioned says :

'At the Spring Meeting of 1804 Mr. Whaley's horse King Pippin (*sic*) was brought on the Curragh of Kildare to run. He was a horse of the most strangely savage and vicious disposition. His particular propensity was flying at and worrying any person who came within his reach ; and if he had an opportunity he would turn his head round, seize his rider by the leg with his teeth, and drag him down from his back. For this reason he was always ridden with what is called a sword ; this is a strong flat stick, having one end attached to the cheek of the bridle and the

<sup>1</sup> See the *Bloodstock Breeders' Review*.

other to the girth of the saddle—a contrivance to prevent a horse of this kind from getting at his rider. King Pippin (*sic*) had long been difficult to manage, and dangerous to go near, but on the occasion in question he could not be got to run at all : nobody could put a bridle on his head. There was a large concourse of people assembled on the Curragh, and one countryman, more fearless than the rest of the lookers-on, volunteered his services to bridle the horse. No sooner had he commenced operations than King Pippin (*sic*) seized him somewhere about the shoulders and shook him as a dog does a rat. Fortunately for the poor fellow his body was very thickly covered with clothes. Owing to this circumstance the horse never fairly got hold of his skin and the man escaped with little injury. The ‘Whisperer’ was now sent for. This mysterious horse tamer soon arrived, was shut up with the horse all night, and in the morning exhibited the hitherto ferocious animal following him about the course like a dog—lying down at his command—suffering his mouth to be opened—in short, as quiet almost as a sheep. He came out at the same meeting and won his race, and his docility continued satisfactorily for a considerable period, but at the end of three years his vice returned, and then he is said to have killed a man, for which he was destroyed.’

Jack Spigot (by Ardrossan), who won the 1821 St. Leger for the Hon. T. O. Powlett, was another peculiarly tempered horse. William Scott rode him in the St. Leger, and won on him despite the fact that the horse had taken a violent dislike to him. ‘The Druid’ tells us that Jack Spigot would never allow Scott in his box, and showed great anger on even hearing his voice. However, he gave Bill the first of his remarkable list of St. Leger triumphs.

I had an old ‘chaser as my second charger for a time in the cavalry regiment with which I served. He was one of the quietest horses imaginable, in addition to being one of the biggest and boldest jumpers I ever rode or saw anywhere. Now, at some period or other of his career in racing stables this horse had been either ill-used or teased by stable-boys. I had him in a loose box at the end of my troop stable and gallant hussars were passing him almost every minute during stable time. He took not the slightest notice of them, but let one of the little trumpeters or band boys, to whom I taught riding, as much as look through the doorway and he

became an open-mouthed fiend and did his best to knock down the barrier to get at what I imagine he took to be some of his old tormentors from the training establishment. Of course they rather enjoyed it—when the horse was in his box.

Another horse with a temper was Diamond Jubilee (by St. Simon), the royal winner of the 1900 Derby and St. Leger, and, according to the late Dick Marsh, 'of the thousands of horses that passed through my hands, the only example of an absolutely perfect horse that could not be faulted.' As a two-year-old he behaved badly at the post—worse than Mr. Arthur Coventry had ever seen an animal conduct himself at the gate. At Newmarket he unseated Watts, and was so unmanageable that H.R.H.'s friends inundated him with advice as to the best means of reformation. On hearing various suggestions Marsh replied, 'If we follow this advice I have no doubt we shall drive the colt completely mad. I beg your Royal Highness to allow me a further chance to see what I can do with him.' Marsh declined to allow the horse to be thrashed, despite the urgings of many. He believed that this would spoil the horse's courage, and said 'it is his courage that makes him a high-class horse.'

Diamond Jubilee hated Watts (the hatred was mutual); he hadn't much more affection for Morny Cannon, though he went better for him. It was found at home that the 'Diamond' went quite kindly for Herbert Jones, who rode him in his work and could do anything with him; and after the Prince's horse had seized Cannon and rolled him over after a gallop at Egerton House, Herbert Jones got his chance and made name, fame and fortune for himself. He won the Two Thousand on him, then the Derby (for winning which his Royal Master gave him £1000), and the St. Leger. Before the last race, his trainer tells us, 'he was in one of his devilish moods and intended giving everyone a fight. Every time I went near him with the saddle he would shoot straight up in the air and stand on his hind-legs. Then a further performance was in store when Jones came to get up. The old friendship did not matter now. The colt was

thoroughly roused, and would have nothing to do with being mounted until Jones took him unawares and sprang on to his shoulders.'

The first instance of an unruly horse being 'warned off' as a dangerous savage was in 1912, when the Stewards of the Jockey Club debarred Vigilance from being entered for any future races.

There is a saying 'God sends the horses and the Devil sends the men to look after them.' Funnily enough, as I write these words I can remember the very first occasion on which I heard the truism uttered. Mr. W. Leng (who bought so many blood-'uns at one time to go to Germany), and I were leaning over the rails criticising the horses which were about to run for the Stockton Handicap. Each time one lad passed us in the parade ring we saw he was 'jagging' his horse's mouth in a vicious manner. It has already been shown how ill-treatment both on the training ground and during races makes savages of some animals, but cruelty and mismanagement are not the only ways in which the devil employs his agents amongst equine aristocrats. Quite a lengthy chapter could be written, for instance, regarding the substitution of one horse for another in races. There is nothing new in such legerdemain; indeed there have probably been attempts to represent one horse to be another as long as there has been racing. It will be shown in a succeeding chapter that in very early times 'the clerk of the race' had the animals which were to run paraded before him at the time of entry as a precautionary measure.

So long ago as the York Spring Meeting of 1825 there was scandal owing to an attempt at substitution there. A horse of Mr. Rowlay's purporting to be Tom Paine, arrived on the course to run as a half-bred but was recognised as the thoroughbred horse Tybalt, bred by the late Lord Grosvenor by Thunderbolt, out of Meteora. Mr. Rowlay had certified that the horse was Tom Paine and a half-bred, so an investigation was instituted, the result of which was that Tom Paine (*alias* Tybalt) was not to be allowed to run. His owner was called upon to prove his pedigree in a month and, failing to do so, the stewards of the Jockey Club went into the matter,

when it was clearly established that Tom Paine was really Tybalt and that there had been an attempt at substitution. They therefore disqualified the animal for every race in which he had run as Tom Paine, but we don't find it recorded that the owner was 'warned off.'

Just a century ago the Earl of Egremont won the Derby for the fifth and last time, his 1826 winner being Lapdog by Whalebone. Bird, who trained for the Earl, acknowledged on his death-bed that two of the horses which secured the great Epsom classic for Lord Egremont were four-year-olds, they having been substituted when two-year-olds for yearlings running in the paddock. The dying trainer added to his confession that Lord Egremont knew nothing of the substitution. Whether Lapdog was a four-year-old or not Bird did not reveal. In the 1826 Derby the favourite was tailed off and finished absolutely last, the second favourite didn't get a place, and the winner started at 50 to 1. There were 19 runners and the winner beat his own stable, Lord Egremont running a more fancied black colt (also by Whalebone) called Black Swan.

I had an interesting letter recently from 'Bob' Spencer, who was the first to get astride the famous Bend Or, the Derby winner of 1880. His evidence was much in demand in the dramatic sequel to that race, when Messrs. Brewer and Blanton laid an objection, as joint owners of the second horse, Robert the Devil, on the grounds that Bend Or was not Bend Or at all but Tadcaster. The objection was overruled, though the Right Hon. Mr. 'Jimmy' Lowther used to say in after years that additional facts which had come to light led him to believe that he, Lord Calthorpe, and Mr. W. G. Craven (stewards of the Jockey Club), had given a wrong decision. In the subsequent St. Leger Robert the Devil, ridden by T. Cannon, won, the 11-to-8-on Bend Or (again ridden by F. Archer) not even being placed.

There is a wealth of tradition and fact in connection with 'disguising' horses so that they would not be recognised at race meetings and might be passed off for another animal either less-weighted, superior in pace, or younger. How easy it was for experts to do this is abundantly proved by the fact

that there are several well-authenticated cases of animals being stolen, trimmed up and markings stained, then sold to their erstwhile owners at horse fairs. Hogging the mane, 'cropping' the ears (a now obsolete practice), cutting a horse's tail, and painting out white markings on the face or legs, so alters the appearance of horses that in days when supervision was less strict many unscrupulous owners succeeded in substituting one animal for another. There are, however, to-day, as there were in the yesterdays of the past, many men who have a wonderful memory for horses. Once they have really closely examined an animal they never seem to forget it. So was it that in the long run these rogues of the Turf were found out in their evil ways and were 'warned off.'

In recent years there have been one or two attempts to outwit the racing powers that be and the public—notably that at Stockton—but whatever questionable conduct may still obtain there is little of this 'disguising' horses nowadays, either at training quarters or on the race-course. It has been proved beyond all doubt that to be successful as a scoundrel on the Turf a man must either work single-handed or must have accomplices who are deaf, dumb, unable to write, and without any memory. Failing this, one or the other holding the secret invariably imagines he has not got sufficient good red gold for holding his tongue and lets the cat out of the bag.

It was William I'Anson, the veteran Malton trainer, who once arranged to disguise some horses to be tried on York race-course so that no tout would be able to tell what animals were galloped, let alone which had won. He took the animals to the wood on the far-side of Knavesmire and, with a bucket of Fuller's earth, gave some of them white legs and blazes right down their faces and painted out the natural white legs of others. Mr. J. B. Cookson, partner with the late Mr. 'Charlie' Perkins in so many good horses, and long Master of the Morpeth Hunt, was sent to the finishing point to act as judge, and when the horses he had seen during the process of their painting passed him, he hadn't the remotest idea which was which or what had won, though he had a share in all the animals. Jockeys had been engaged to ride



in the trial, and they had to be consulted as to which had won and what were the placings of the others—not a very reliable course, for jockeys often do not know the result of a race till they are returning to the gate leading from the course to the paddock and see what numbers are up.

This system of disguising horses was frequently resorted to by trainers who wished to hoodwink the touts. They were perfectly justified in such action which enabled their employers to get their money on before someone else had taken the cream of the market on hearing from their hired 'watcher' at training quarters how certain animals had gone in a stripped gallop. It was when horses were brought to race meetings so disguised that they might, and often did, pass for some other animal, that real villainy entered into the matter.

This was particularly the case in races for half-breds, once so popular. The conditions were that the animals were not to be pure thoroughbreds and that they were not to have been at a training stable. Frequently those whose consciences would allow them to stoop to anything to win races and, what was more important, to win big sums from the ring, entered a three-parts bred hunter and, on the day of the race, brought at the last moment some thoroughbred, possibly by the same sire and very like the animal entered, to the course, heavily sheeted and bandaged. It was such malpractice at Thirsk which resulted in the late Mr. Masterman being warned off the Turf. He substituted Alexandra by Neville, a thoroughbred, for a half-bred filly. There was another notable instance at Lincoln and many others all over the country in the early days of racing.

Mr. William Day, the famous trainer, used to tell a story of substitution at Northampton. E. Jones, who trained near Marlborough, had a three-year-old colt by Melbourne, named Bocket, and also a two-year-old filly by Bay Middleton, named Ruby. The latter was engaged to run at Northampton in a two-year-old race, and, without the knowledge of his owner (Mr. B. Way), Bocket was also taken to the meeting though not a runner. Ruby was notoriously a hot, nervous, runaway youngster, so that the stewards' permission was

easily obtained for her to be led to the post and mounted there, thus missing the usual parade in front of the stands and in the paddock. But it was Brocket which was walked down to the paddock covered up with sheets and with a hood on. Bartholomew, who had previously ridden Brocket a winner, ought to have known (perhaps he *did* !) that it was the colt and not the filly he was mounting. Of course the three-year-old colt won in a common canter amongst the two-year-olds. As soon as he had passed the post, he was covered up with sheets again and led away to one of the closed boxes on the course and, as soon as the 'all right' had been shouted, he left Northampton for home. Of course the bookies paid out, and it was not for some time that the whole story became known. This strikes one as a particularly daring piece of deceit—not merely to run a three-year-old for a two-year-old but to represent a filly by a colt.

The most famous case of substitution in the history of the Turf was that of Running Rein in the Derby. It was not actually Running Rein which won the great Epsom classic, but a four-year-old horse called Maccabaeus. Running Rein had been spirited away by his owner, one Goodman Levy (known on the Turf as Goodman), and Maccabaeus, another of his horses, which was a year older and which had been found to be useful, was sent to take his place at the training quarters. The real Running Rein was hidden away at Finchley, and it was given out that Maccabaeus was dead. But the dead animal, under the name of Running Rein, won a two-year-old race at Newmarket, and the fat was in the fire at once. The Duke of Rutland (who had 'heard something') claimed the stake on the ground that the winner was a three-year-old. Goodman was able to call evidence which satisfied the stewards that the horse was Running Rein and a two-year-old, a youth from Malton, who had assisted at the foaling of the real Running Rein, convincing them. Thinking that no one would have the temerity to raise the question again, Maccabaeus went to Epsom to take the place of the real Running Rein in the Derby. Objections were lodged before the race, and it was intimated to Mr. Goodman that if the horse won, the stakes would be withheld for full enquiries.

Feeling himself safe Goodman ran Running Rein—*alias* Maccabaeus—and won. Then Lord George Bentinck took the matter up, and eventually Goodman appeared at court. There it was abundantly proved that there had been a wilful and flagrant fraud, and Lord Geroge was able to produce a London hairdresser, named Rossi, from whom Goodman had purchased hair-dye to disguise Maccabaeus so that the youth from Malton was hoodwinked. In his summing-up Baron Alderson, who tried the case, said :

‘ The evidence has produced great regret and disgust to my mind. It has disclosed a horrible fraud, and has shown noblemen and gentlemen of rank associating and betting with men of low status and infinitely below them in society. In so doing they have found themselves cheated and made the dupes of the grossest frauds. They may depend upon it that this will always be so when gentlemen associate with blackguards.’

The famous old-time trainer John Kent—who had charge of Lord George Bentinck’s horses—points out that a remarkable fact in connection with Running Rein’s Derby is that two of the horses which started for it were four-year-olds and one of them broke the leg of the other whilst going round Tattenham Corner.

I have dealt at some length with the D’Orsay case in another book and need only refer to one or two others in concluding what is rather an unsavoury subject. In 1844 (the second occasion on which the race for the New Stakes was run) the winner was Mr. Herbert’s Bloodstone, ridden by Bell, who beat the favourite, Mr. John Day’s Old England, in a hollow manner by many lengths. The following extract from the *Racing Calendar* gives us some clue as to the *raison d’être*, for immediately after the race Mr. John Day claimed the stakes on the ground that the horse Bloodstone was more than two years old. The case was heard by the stewards (Lords Rosslyn, Stradbroke, and Exeter) on Friday, 7th June (the last day of the meeting), before the races, when the horse was examined on the part of the owner or the trainer, and the following decision was given :

‘ We, the Master of the Buckhounds and Stewards of the Jockey Club, having called to our aid Mr. Field, Veterinary

Surgeon, of Oxford Street, and Mr. O. H. Parry, Veterinary Surgeon at Reading ; and, having perused their certificates, are of opinion that the horse Bloodstone is three years old, and we award the New Stakes to Old England. We are further of opinion that Mr. John Newman gave positive orders to the boy Bell, the rider of Bloodstone, to lose the New Stakes ; that Bell having mentioned the orders he received to his master, Planner, before the race, and having afterwards won the race as far as he could, acted in a manner highly creditable to himself.'

'Audax' tells us : 'Mr. Day objected to the qualification of Bloodstone on other grounds, but as the proof of the first objection was considered decisive the others were not proceeded with. Mr. Herbert afterwards brought an action against the stakeholders, who obtained an interpleader rule, and Mr. Herbert was made plaintiff in the action, with Mr. Day defendant. This case was tried at Guildford Assizes on 5th and 6th August, and a verdict found for the defendant. This, it may be added, occurred in the same year as the Running Rein fraud in the Derby.'

In 1867 there was another notorious case of running a three-year-old as a two-year-old—that of Soiled Dove. This resulted in General A. Shirley and Mr. J. Arnold being warned off.

In more recent times (1920) we have had the sensational Coat of Mail substitution case at Stockton-on-Tees. This resulted in Peter Christian Barrie, Walter Hopkins, William Henry Collis, and Horace Samuel Berg being warned off, and the horses Jazz and Homs being perpetually disqualified. In addition Barrie went to gaol.

## CHAPTER III

### TRAINERS AND TRAINING

‘ Good horses make good trainers.’ Personally I have long held the opinion that the cleverest trainers, the men who really show the most horse-mastership and the best stable-management, are not necessarily those who win classic races, and come much into the limelight, but often those little obscure men, who succeed in making their stable pay its way and show a profit with bad, patched-up horses. They indeed have to think, to know how to train, to make every animal under their charge an individual study, to know something about veterinary science, to choose courses and races likely to suit the bad-legged horses in their yard, and to know the psychological moment when, if they are to win at all, they may be backed. These little men have frequently been ‘ through the mill.’ They have served their apprenticeship to the game and are not ‘ kid-glove men ’ who, as old Martin Gurry used to say, ‘ have never carried a muck-skep across a yard in their lives.’

Of course there is no reason why a man born in the highest rank of society, who spent none of his early days in racing stables and had no connection in his youth with the Turf, should not make a successful trainer. He possibly, not to say *probably*, has an inherent knowledge of, and affection for, horses ; as likely as not he had very early lessons in stable management and economy from some skilful old stud-groom, who controlled the hunters in the home boxes, made them hard and fit to commence each season, and kept them so from November till the end of April.

Old John Osborne often said to me that a trainer’s most difficult and yet most important duty is not so much to get

his horses *fit*, but to be able to tell when they *are* fit and at the top of their form. This necessitates more than stable craft, though that is essential in the first place to make horses fit. To be in a position to say to patrons, and especially those in a stable which gambles, that such and such horses will be at their best and should be backed after another gallop or two, or after a public outing at such and such a place on such a date, requires a discerning and experienced eye, ability to 'weigh up form,' and a knowledge of pace, confirmed by a trial gallop at home.

It is said that trials are often misleading and that certain evidence can only be secured by asking horses the question in public. As a matter of fact races are often so falsely run, and there are so many chances and incidents in them, that they may easily be as deceiving as stripped gallops on the home downs. Mr. E. G. de Mestre once told me that he was a firm believer in the clock to tell him the state of Denmark with his horses, whilst the veteran Mr. William I'Anson of Malton (who trained more winners on the flat than any other trainer during or since his time), had no faith in it. William I'Anson once told me an interesting story (by no means isolated of its kind) regarding a horse he had of the late Viscount (then Mr.) Chaplin's, named Khedive—a chestnut by Macaroni out of Bumblekite. Said he :

'We tried Khedive a certainty for the Cambridgeshire of 1874. I don't ever remember being so certain that a race was as good as over as after this trial. We tried Khedive with The Pearl (by Newminister), one of the four daughters by Caller Ou I trained for Mr. Chaplin, then six years old, and a three-year-old of J. Dawson's which had run second in the Two Thousand. Khedive had been broken down, but had got quite sound and was fit and well. He gave 21 lbs. to The Pearl, and young Jeffery, who rode Khedive, came a real cracker, beating Dawson's horse a length and The Pearl six lengths behind. No wonder on this we thought the Cambridgeshire "all over bar shouting," as the saying goes. This was on the Friday, and on the Saturday Mr. Chaplin wired me to bring the horses on to Newmarket. I got as far as Peterborough that night, going first train Sunday morning

to see Mr. Chaplin. He said he would run The Pearl in the Cambridgeshire Trial Handicap on the Monday to see if she was in form so as to put the home trial to a further test. The Pearl won her race in a common canter. We were certain that there was no mistake in the home gallop. The Pearl was also in the Cambridgeshire, but of course Mr. Chaplin declared to win with Khedive. He was made favourite at 5 to 1 amongst forty-two runners, *and was not placed, The Pearl beating him* in the race, which was won by Peut-etre. I could never explain it—how *can you?* . . . unless it was simply a case of a horse being fit and well, like a man, one day and all out of sorts the next. That, I think, is the explanation of many racing mysteries of in-and-out running.'

'Did you place as much reliance in home trials afterwards?' I asked, to which I'Anson replied :

'Oh yes! I've always believed in private trials, and think they're quite as dependable as those on a race-course if they're ridden in the same way as a race. The mistake of home trials is that boys are often put up, and they go hell-for-leather all the way, with their horses unbalanced, and without even taking an 'easer' or using their judgment like jockeys do in a race. That's what makes trials at home wrong. I always had jockeys up, and put something in which was speedy to go like the very devil and then get out of the way when it had done its job. On the whole I found home trials work out very well and true to the form they showed there. Certainly, the Khedive mystery trial was an exception.'

Of course trainers who only have a small stable are often without a trial horse which can give them a line to go upon, and either have to beg a gallop with a horse in another stable, or rely on their intuitive knowledge of pace, condition, and the way a horse strides out. This is often deceiving to all except expert men with a special gift and long experience. I remember once having a little blood mare which I hunted and occasionally rode out with the horses in training at that day in Hambleton. In half speed gallops she seemed as good as anything at a mile, and I thought there might be a race

in her.' The late Bob Adams (one of the finest horsemen I ever saw and one of the best judges of pace) laughed at me when I suggested the idea to him. 'Couldn't beat me,' was his remark, to which he added, 'there's a lot of them speedy till they get alongside of something which is extended and *can* go.' However, with the assurance of ingenuous youth, I persisted in my idea, and in a rough up gallop a few days later I put a good light boy up on my mare. She never saw which way they had gone and soon satisfied me that there was not a race in her.

I simply tell the story to illustrate how little men with only one or two horses, nothing to try them with and not a great deal of experience, may often imagine their ducks are swans. Nevertheless, if I was owning racehorses again, I should prefer to have them in a small stable presided over by a man who has been long at the game, who has bought his experience (maybe with someone else's money), who is a good feeder and, because he only *has* a few horses, can make an individual study of each. Jim Adams, who has been training as long as anyone else in the north of England and comes of an old racing family, has often said to me that he considers about a dozen horses as much as any man can look after to do justice to his patrons and his own conscience. Of course most trainers are compelled to leave a good deal to their head man, seeing that they are themselves so much on the race-course. Blessed indeed is the trainer with a big string of horses, who has a knowledgeable head lad of the old hard-working, honest school. In many cases the success of the establishment is due to the man who never appears in the limelight and who never gets any credit, but who is as jealous of the reputation of the stable as his employer. Not infrequently, however, owners have seen how the wind blows and have set the erstwhile head lad up as a trainer with most satisfactory results.

The fault of many gentlemen and amateur trainers is that they give their horses too much work and leave their races behind at home. It was old John Osborne who said he preferred to gallop horses for 'the brass.' I well remember John, Bob Robson, (then training at Farnham for the late



Mr. R. C. Vyner and others), and myself watching some horses going round in a parade ring, and remarking how two of them were tucked up like greyhounds and as listless as cows.

‘I like my horses to be on their toes and fit to jump out of their skins when they come on to a race-course,’ remarked Bob Robson, who added, ‘I’d give ’em golden sovereigns to eat if I thought it would do ’em any good.’

‘It’s not the feeding that’s been wrong,’ said John Osborne; ‘they’ve had all the life galloped out of them at home. I should imagine they’ve tried them every week—a fault with young trainers, who imagine that they can keep horses at the top of their form for ever so long . . . no man can ever do that either with himself or with his horses. I always believe in working horses in reason according to their mangers. You can’t give shy feeders, and horses that don’t clean out their mangers, the same work that you give a gross, hungry horse to which you can’t give plenty to eat, and which puts on flesh quickly.’

‘No!’ added Robson, ‘and you can’t work bad-legged horses, or those with a screw loose somewhere, like you can sound animals. I’m a great believer in road work for horses—getting them into fresh localities every day.’

Apropos of this the late John Porter told me he could train a good horse by the side of the road.

Reverting to Bob Robson’s ideas about giving horses a constant change of locality for their daily exercise work, I am reminded that during the season 1926-1927 the jumpers in training at Wetherby were frequently taken out to see the Bramham Moor hounds at work. This does not mean that they were actually taken across country when a fox was found, though Mr. Fred Archer regularly hunted Double Chance, the 1925 Grand National winner, when he was at Malton. The late Mr. Adam Scott used occasionally to take a whole string of racehorses out with the far Northumbrian packs, believing that a change in the usual routine of training was as beneficial to horses as to men.

When the aforementioned Mr. R. I. Robson was at the height of his success as a Yorkshire trainer of jumpers he

endeavoured to take his string a new route every morning, arguing that they enjoyed the variety and were more likely to get benefit from what they *enjoyed* than by going day by day to the same gallops. He had a theory that it made horses more intelligent and clever to let them see something of the world, and if there was a fixture of the York and Ainsty Pack near at hand, he often took his blood 'uns in training there, and sometimes had them popped over a natural fence or two.

Ravenscliffe, which won him so many races, and if not for bad luck might have won him Eremon's Grand National, carried him through many good runs with hounds. Not a few other horses which have become unsound, stale, thoroughly satiated and nauseated with everything connected with racing and racing stables, have been brought back to their old form by a few weeks with hounds. It has often also been found that 'chasers which have become what is known as 'tricky,' frequently retrieve their characters, and are no longer refusing and 'running out' rogues, after a holiday in the hunting field from orthodox training methods.

No one who has any experience of racing stables but must have noticed how many horses begin to funk, sweat, and work themselves into a nervous state (all loss of vitality) as they approach the gallops. They know as well as, or better than, the boy on their backs exactly what is in store for them, and it is this sameness, this routine at Newmarket, which William I'Anson thinks so affected many nervous horses that they were unable to give any good account of themselves there, yet in quieter quarters with frequent change and variety, as well as freedom from horses galloping past them as on the Heath at Newmarket, won many races after he got there. It was the great John Scott, 'The Wizard of the North,' who said he wouldn't train a donkey at Newmarket.

Except a trainer is having an occasional winner and either backing it himself or 'standing in so much to nothing,' he has a very thin time of it. There is really not much to be made at the professional work of training, after wages, fodder, bills, rent, and all other charges are paid. Bad horses cost

as much to keep as good ones and are considerably more worry and anxiety. It is generally these the little men have to potter on with and pick up a few small races as best they can. There is every credit due to them when they succeed—but oh ! the depression which settles like a heavy pall over a stable which goes on from month to month without capturing a race ! One can feel it permeating the whole establishment. *Experientia docet !* The man in the street decides that the trainer doesn't know his job, those who understand are really sympathetic, knowing it is often a case of trying to make bricks without straw.

It is often argued that present-day trainers are much more inclined to 'molly-coddle' the horses under their charge and to keep them in glass cases than were the training grooms of yore. Certainly the latter were inclined with their 'Yorkshire sweats' and constant 'strong work,' either to make or *break* horses in their preparation. It is true, too, that they ran their horses on courses on which to-day a donkey would not be run—hills and holes, sometimes over roads, and on tracks which had little attention paid to them from one meeting to another. Because they entered their horses at such places it doesn't follow that they didn't shake their heads, disapprove and urge the need of 'something being done.' At a time when courses were uniformly bad the standard and expectations would be correspondingly low, and before gate money meetings, with their competition, the incentive towards improvement would be small. Nevertheless that good going was appreciated, and every known device employed to procure it a century ago, is evidenced by the care expended on the training grounds at Hambleton, Malton, Newmarket, and elsewhere. At Newmarket about 1820<sup>1</sup> the fourth Duke of Portland effected radical improvements, 'making use of all agricultural arts known at the time—the penning of sheep, importation of new grass and such like devices. . . . His Grace also undertook the paring, burning, and breaking up of that part of the Heath intersected by roads.' Over seventy years ago that strange Turfite, Mr. Bowes of Streatlam Castle, laid down a tan gallop on Langton

<sup>1</sup> See F. Siltzer's *Newmarket*.

Wold at Malton, for 'The Wizard of Whitewall' to do work on, and this was harrowed every morning before and after the horses had done work.

Even in those days they were worried with dry seasons. Malton, Beverley, Middleham, and other trainers all sent their horses to do work at Hambleton, where the centuries' old turf never rattles winter or summer. In 1835 *The Sporting Magazine* suggested (probably inaccurately) that even Hambleton was affected by drought. The writer to the journal mentioned thus addressed those endeavouring to pick out the Leger winner of that year :

'So long and continued has been the excessive drought in the Northern Counties, and so extremely hot the state of the atmosphere for a very considerable length of time, that all the several training grounds of Langton, Hambleton, Middleham, and Pigburn may be said to be almost literally as hard as stone. Such has been the state of the ground at Pigburn, where Mundig, Hornesey (*sic*), Ainderby, Coriolanus, and all the others in training under the superintendence of Mr. W. Scott are regularly exercised, that Mr. S—— has positively been at the serious and heavy expenditure of employing men to water the gallops with water carts from morning till night for the last few weeks, to render the ground softer and in better condition. The scarcity of water in the neighbourhood of Durham is such that farmers have to drive their cattle some miles to the nearest watering places, the springs and brooks being mostly dried up. Such being the state of the principal training grounds, it will operate very materially in favour of the outsiders for the Leger, as the very act of putting horses into strong work and thereby drawing out the powers of superior ability, can only be done at the great risk either of destroying the horse's feet or breaking him down.'

As a matter of fact the favourite, the Hon. E. L. Mostyn's Oaks winner, Queen of Trumps (ridden by Tommy Lye), won the 1835 St. Leger, with Hornsea second and Mundig (the Derby winner) nowhere. Incidentally, it was this St. Leger which ruined Ridsdale, known as 'the man of York.'

Apropos of the 'Yorkshire sweats,' or long fast work horses were given in their clothing, it is interesting to note that it was Thomas Dawson, of Middleham, who was the first trainer of consequence to discontinue the practice. When his brother Joseph went to Newmarket and adopted Thomas' plan the other trainers there laughed at him, but he lived to see the old method superseded, though Custance tells us in his book that when he first went to Newmarket in 1856 it was a usual thing to see from fifteen to twenty horses sweated every morning. All the old Turf writers held sweating to be one of the most important articles in the trainer's creed, and even so late as the days of 'Nimrod' we find that authority writing :

'The act of sweating the racehorse is always a cause of anxiety to the trainer, and particularly so on the eve of a great race for which he may be favourite. The great weight of clothes with which he is laden is always dangerous, and often fatal to his legs, and there is generally a spy at hand to ascertain if he pulls up sound or lame. Some nonsense has been written by the author of a late work about omitting sweating in the process of training ; but what would the Chifneys say to this? They are acknowledged pre-eminent in the art, but they are also acknowledged to be very severe—perhaps too much so—with their horses in their work ; and without sweating them in clothes, they would find it necessary to be much more so than they are. It is quite certain that horses cannot race without doing severe work.'

Says an old ballad :

A trainer on a lonely hill  
Will do a deed of mystery,  
And scribes will several columns fill,  
With that trial and its history.

The trainer will be all surprise  
At the facts they have collected,  
And the owner, when they meet his eyes,  
Will be equally affected.

The old-fashioned type of trainer—there are still a few of them left—loved to be mysterious and looked upon secrecy as part and parcel of their profession. They would put themselves to endless inconvenience to outwit the touts, who, in



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consequence, were often compelled to be out all night behind some wall or hedge near the gallops. Even so recently as the days of William I'Anson, of Malton, horses to be tried were disguised to hoodwink the 'watchers.' Recently the veteran William told me how on one occasion they nearly defeated their ends by painting white legs brown and chestnut legs white. It was thuswise: the late Mr. 'Charlie' Perkins and Mr. Cookson wanted to have a gamble, and in order to secure secrecy decided they would not try their horses at Malton but take them to Knavesmire at York, and so alter the appearance of the animals that should news of the prospective gallops 'get out,' the touts would be completely baffled. So thoroughly did I'Anson paint out the distinguishing marks given by Nature and add others of his own invention, that Mr. Cookson, who acted as judge, was unable to place the horses, and the jockeys, who rode in the trial, had to be consulted as to what won it and where they all finished.

Nowadays telegrams, telephones (and soon aeroplanes and wireless) have made secrecy next to impossible, and the racing tout no longer goes in fear of a horse-whipping, or worse, at the hands of the trainer whose horses he watches with a view to reporting their daily work and departure to meetings at which they are engaged. As a matter of fact the tout is not merely tolerated but, in many cases, trainers supply them with the information they publish—possibly giving just as much as they desire to be put into cold print. I know of at least one trainer who acted as his own tout—Mr. Godfrey Miller, when he had Faithful Don, The Valet, and other useful horses, at Hambleton. He sent off daily wires as to the work his horses were doing in preparation for their forthcoming engagements.

After all, unless a trainer divulges what horse, or horses, he is actually trying, and at what weights they are being tried, the publication of the results of such gallops is more likely to be misleading than otherwise to the public. Generally speaking, the jockeys who ride in trials don't know the weights they carry, so that even to them a trial may not mean very much. The old-time trainers were great believers in



private trials, with jockeys weighed out on special machines which indicated the weights at the back, so that those allowed to stand there alone knew what each horse carried. To-day a great many trainers put their horses into some race before they are quite 'wound up' to concert pitch, tell their jockey the animal is 'short of a gallop or two,' that 'they'll be satisfied if they can get bang up third or fourth without their hand being too much exposed,' and then learn what they can from the result and the way the race is run. The only danger to this plan is that the official handicapper may see as much as they do, understand their motive, and give the horse an impost in accordance with the notes he made on that particular race, the next time the occasion arises for him to be weighted. Other astute Turfites may also 'tumble' to the fact that this is a public trial and make a mental resolve 'to wait for — the first time there is any money for it.' As to trials, more will be said later.

One of the old school of mystery loving, suspicious, 'secret' trainers to whom I have previously referred, in recent years got rid of a boy (who ultimately turned out to be a 'crack' jockey and a veritable gold-mine to the trainer to whom he went), because he 'wrote too many letters.' Probably this lad, like many others in a similar position, had succumbed to the systematic importuning which continually takes place on the part of 'punters' who are ready to pay well for 'information' (as they imagine, and, as they term it) 'straight from the horse's mouth.' Whether this information is worth anything or nothing it is nevertheless what employees at racing establishments are paid to keep to themselves, and there is a strongly worded clause in the Jockey Club's Rules of Racing regarding divulging the results of private trials and other stable secrets. That the rule is little heeded can hardly be wondered at in view of the fact that apprentice jockeys, head lads, and even stable-boys, are frequently circularised with a view to getting them to betray for payment the hopes, expectations, and doings of their masters and those for whom they train. One is inclined to wonder of how much value such so-called 'inside information' is really worth; for, after all, trainers even in these

days of less secrecy and mystery do not tell either their stable jockeys or apprentices for what particular engagement horses are being 'readied,' any more than they divulge the weights at which such horses are tried. Then again, even if they *did*, how often do the supposed 'good things' come undone! There is as much art, my masters, in accurately summing up a trial and placing horses to the best advantage as regards course and distance, as there is in training them.

Of how much value to 'punters' is the 'information,' or are the 'stable secrets' for which they pay? I suppose one generation after another, however, will perpetuate the conceit that so long as someone in breeches and leggings in a training stable is 'sending them letters,' they are really and truly '*in the know*.'

Of course stable information *does* sometimes inexplicably percolate through all the network of precautions taken to keep it within a small circle of those entitled to possess it. Intended *coups* are not infrequently frustrated by treachery or unfulfilled promises of secrecy. It was my old friend 'Bob' Harper, who used to ride so well a couple of decades ago and now holds a starter's licence, who most pointedly illustrated to me many moons ago the danger of making confidants. At that time he was Mr. Gunter's right-hand man at Wetherby and had some horses at Haydock Park. We were walking to the course together from Ashton-in-Makerfield when a stranger came up to 'Bob' and asked him what chance these particular horses had. Without a word Harper drew a piece of paper from his pocket and making a figure 1 said, 'I tell *you*; that's *one*, isn't it?' The stranger agreed. 'You tell someone else; that's 11, isn't it?' Again the information seeker agreed. 'He tells someone else,' continued 'Bob' (making the third stroke, III) 'How many's that?' '*Three*,' answered the astounded questioner. '*No*, that's just where you're wrong; it's *one hundred and eleven*,' replied Harper walking on. . . . And it is so, my masters!

I will relate two out of many instances which will further illustrate the leakage of information despite all efforts to

prevent such eventualities. On one occasion the late Mr. R. C. Vyner, of Newby Hall, Ripon, sent some horses early one morning across the fields for five or six miles to be tried, quietly and secretly, on my dear old friend Mr. R. I. Robson's gallops at Farnham, near Knaresborough. Robson, according to his custom, had some men at hand to go over the trial ground and level such turf as had been turned up by the horses' hoofs after 'strong work.' These men stood near the finishing point and, as soon as the jockeys pulled up and were giving a description of how the horses had gone, the workmen began their job. Evidently one of them had made a point of being near enough to hear what passed, and, as later events proved, was a traitor in the camp, for next morning a certain sporting paper came out with a description of the trial almost word for word as it had been given to Mr. Vyner. The Judas had made it his business to inform the local tout, whom it was hoped to outwit by the manœuvre which had been so carefully planned.

The second instance is one in which I personally was concerned. We had a horse—one of the very ugliest blood-'uns I ever saw—which had never won a race, but which had suddenly improved with such leaps and bounds that we thought a 'seller' he was in with a nice weight a few days hence would be a gift for him. Leaving nothing to chance we engaged jockeys to ride in a trial and took the precaution of not letting them know exactly which horse we *wanted* to win, or what weights the various horses in the trial carried. We made doubly sure of secrecy by going out at daybreak to circumvent the resident 'watchers' (*alias* touts), who daily sent reports to the Press. The trial ended as we had hoped, and the parties mainly interested felt justified in having a big gamble. Amongst themselves they agreed that :

*They would not tell a single soul—no, not even their own brothers ; they wouldn't have a penny on at the meeting or even be seen near the betting ring ; and to obviate any money getting back thither they would split their total stake up into comparatively small amounts amongst S.P. merchants all over the country.*

It all sounded a sort of hermetically-sealed, air-tight compartment without the possible chance of an escape of the

contents. So we all felt confident that the horse would start at least at 10 to 1—possibly at 100 to 8.

Imagine our surprise when on the morning of the race we found our horse was all but a street-corner tip—‘the very dogs were barking it,’ to use a racing phrase. It won all right . . . but was returned at 6 to 4!!! After the race one or two people in the paddock showed me a tipster’s printed circular in which what we had thought a well-kept secret was exposed. How the story got out we never knew, but it would have made the traitors in the camp look down their noses if the management of the hoped-for *coup* had been in less scrupulous hands and it had been decided not to run the horse ‘out’ when the odds were so short. There could have been no questions asked in the case of an animal with no form if the owner or trainer had said: ‘I don’t think the horse is quite fit. . . . Tell the jockey to ride without whip or spurs and not to bustle him too much, as he wants a bit of time yet.’

Though there is much less treachery in racing establishments than is imagined, it is not so long ago that a well-known trainer was asked why he didn’t discharge those who made public information regarding his stable. His reply was:

*‘If I did I should hardly have a man left about the place—or a lad either for that matter—and should find that I had to ‘do’ about forty horses myself.’*

So long as the general public imagine—and it is in the main a fallacy—that they can buy the innermost thoughts, expectations, and intentions of trainers and owners from irresponsible boys who sweep up the stable-yard and carry manure skeps, so long will there be a traffic in ‘secrets’ and so long will these same lads employ such imagination as they possess to fill in the blanks caused by the lack of facts.

To be quite frank and candid this form of disloyalty and treachery rarely does any harm to owners of horses, or any good to those who hope to profit by it. Those who set out to betray their trust are not often in a position to ‘give away’ the very ‘secrets’ they are paid to divulge.

Another much more serious form of treachery—that of ‘nobbling’ horses—is now fortunately extinct. The most

famous case in recent years was that of Mr. Vyner's Minting at Newmarket. Minting—who shared honours with Ormonde as being one of the best horses of his period—was 'got at' rather cleverly. A man in the stable was bribed to injure him in one way or another and, after unsuccessfully trying poison he fastened a bandage round a foreleg and struck it with a hammer or piece of metal. This caused considerable swelling and lameness, and the sudden fluctuation in the betting market immediately afterwards told its own story (at any rate in part) to Mr. Vyner before he received news of what had actually happened.

William I'Anson's father caught an apprentice jockey attached to his Malton stable striking the immortal Blair Athol in the most tender part a stallion *could* be struck, and at once 'tumbled' to the cause of mysterious swellings which had stopped the horse's work. He nearly killed the lad and kicked him out of the stable-yard never to return.

In still more recent years (1892) the Duke of Westminster was quite certain that Orme had been 'nobbled' and that some traitor at John Porter's place, or some outsider, had poisoned him. Probably he was incorrect in his suspicions, whilst rumours in the past year or two of similar villainy have gained little credence. The hanging of Daniel Dawson for poisoning a number of horses gave the death-blow to this form of treachery, though to-day no trainer in England fails to have all the box doors in his yard pad-locked, whilst classic horses, such as Derby candidates, are not infrequently watched by detectives and accompanied by a body-guard on the way to fulfil their engagements.

One often hears of the 'closeness' and secrecy of trainers, but I think the late Alec Taylor reduced this to a fine art when he moved from Fyfield to a new place he had built on the other side of the Bath road. Built in the form of an ellipse, the stables, with the boys' bedrooms and living rooms above them, were so planned that no window looked outwards, and at night when the great folding doors were closed it was impossible to hold communication with anyone outside the walls. Immediately at the back of the premises a deep valley, or cleft, sunk between two high ridges of down,

afforded opportunities for trying horses, so that no tout could watch the gallops.

There was a trainer—he is still alive though no longer in charge of racehorses—who was so honest and truthful that he couldn't bring himself to put his friends or anyone else 'in the cart' when he expected to win races. He knew quite well that they not infrequently stepped in before the owners for whom he trained and took the cream of the market, but still he couldn't be either 'mysterious' or deliberately 'put them off' when he had a good thing. One of the patrons of the stable got rather tired of his horses being 'street-corner tips' when they were fancied, so determined to have a gamble on one of them at a good price. The horse was entered at Doncaster and the trainer was told they would just 'give him a gallop to see what he was made of.'

'The horse is very fit and well and could nearly win,' replied the trainer, adding 'I don't want any of us to get into trouble over the business.'

'We'll run him in his hunting shoes, and *I'll* give the jockey his orders,' said the owner. 'It'll be all right.'

So the horse wasn't muzzled in his box, was watered and fed as though a non-runner, and the trainer told all those who approached him they must not back his horse. Then poor old (and now no more) Whipp of Beverley, who was at that time making a book as well as training and running horses, came up and said, 'If you don't fancy yours *I* ought to win this race with my horse. I don't want to know anything else, but do you fancy your horse?'

'Not to-day,' was the answer made in all good faith, 'I'm going to back yours.'

'Thank you very much, that's quite good enough for me,' said Whipp.

The honest and truthful trainer *did* back the Beverley horse, and then went on to the Stand to watch the race. There he was joined by his patron—it was the late Mr. Philip Cadman—who owned the supposed non-tryer. When the field had gone half their journey the trainer remarked, 'Your horse is going wonderfully well—pulling double too! What were your orders to the jockey? If you told him to 'come

on ' and let the horse beat himself, he isn't carrying out *those* instructions. From what I can make out he's going the best of any of 'em and laid right on the rails.'

The owner then let the cat out of the bag : ' My orders to the jockey were to keep with his horses till he passed the distance and then draw out and win.'

My old friend the trainer was furious at this—not because he hadn't backed the horse but because he had led so many astray.

' Don't worry ; you have a pony on to nothing with old Whipp at a 100 to 8.' Well, the horse won in a trot, and the very fact of part of the commission being placed with Whipp made the hoodwinked trainer more uncomfortable than he would otherwise have been. As soon as the ' All right ' was shouted he hastened from the paddock to catch a train home before the racing crowd left the paddock. It was a long time before Whipp really understood and forgave one who had 'acted in all innocence, and who was a very clever trainer but too truthful.

Another truthful trainer whom I know has one stereotyped answer which he frequently gives to information hunters. It is this : ' The horse is fit and well and he's trying—now you know as much as I do.' There are more touts in the paddock at race meetings than ever infested training quarters.

Apropos of touts, Sergeant Robinson used to tell a story regarding Baron Martin, who had an undisguised prejudice against the ' paddock prophets,' who are known in Turf slang as ' tale tellers ' or, more vulgarly still, as ' lug-pullers.' Once when the Baron had become very deaf he was trying a Turf case, one of the counsel in which, named Stammers, was much given to quoting the Scriptures. When he stood up to address the jury Mr. Stammers began : ' The prophet says —— '

When the judge interrupted : ' Don't trouble the jury, Mr. Stammers, about the prophets ; there is not one of them who would not sell his father for sixpennyworth of half-pence.'

' But, my lord,' said Stammers, with offended dignity, ' I was about to quote from the Prophet Jeremiah.'

‘Don’t tell me,’ rejoined the Baron with increasing impatience, ‘I have no doubt your friend, Mr. Myer, is just as bad as the rest of them !’

There are many stories told of old-time trainers’ schemes to hoodwink the touts. I have already related William I’Anson’s story of how horses were painted so as to be unrecognisable at a distance, others were disguised to appear more like fancied animals, trials and exercise work were done at daybreak, and Richard Marsh tells a story of a steeplechase trial by moonlight. Touts, however, often laid out on the training grounds all night to defeat such attempts to best them and, as a rule, they had a friend at court who kept them ‘wise.’ A correspondent closely in touch with the principals sends me a story which has not, I think, been told before, of Paddy Drislane’s original and successful method of deceiving the ‘watchers.’ Here is the account of the Bates-Drislane conspiracy :

‘When Fred Bates succeeded old Tom Dawson as trainer for the Jardine-Johnstone partners at Tupgill, Middleham, he trained Tam-o’-Shanter and won the Chester Cup with him in 1876, this being his first big winner from Tupgill, though he turned out many others afterwards, and from 1880 to 1890 won the Ascot Stakes six times, with Teviotdale 1880-1881 ; Ishmael 1883 ; Greenbank 1884 ; and Lord Lorne 1889-1890. When Tam-o’-Shanter was undergoing his preparation for Chester, Bates arrived at the conclusion that the Cup was a good thing for him and that he ought to raise every penny he could to back him. Naturally he wanted to get as long a price as possible, so Paddy Drislane and he devised a scheme to accomplish this, as the horse was then at a shortish price in the market. Their *modus operandi* was as follows : Paddy got some cow-dung in a bucket and diluted it to the proper strength, and then with a mop plastered Tam’s quarters from underneath the tail downwards, to make it appear he was in physic. Instead of his usual gallop he was walked about near the Tupgill stables so that the touts could see him. This performance was repeated for a couple of days or more. Of course the news that the horse was in physic and doing no work was circulated by the touts



and the price expanded accordingly. When all was quiet, however, towards evening 'Tam' got his usual gallop in the absence of the lynx-eyed watchers. Bates got his money on at a long price and won 'a packet.' As a matter of fact Tam-o'-Shanter started at 9 to 1, and in a field of nineteen, beating Freeman by a neck.'

Of poor 'Paddy' Drislane, the Middleham trainer, so well remembered by the older school of Turfites, Mr. Stephen Scrope sends me the following amusing story :

'Poor old Paddy was, as you know, a Catholic, but I fear he ranked in that line only as a poor-class selling plater. Whenever my old governor met him in Middleham he used to say to him : "Paddy, my lad, I have not seen you at church lately," and Paddy invariably replied, "Well, Squire, I am as good a Catholic as I can be, I go to Mass regularly every Christmas Day and every Easter Sunday." On one of these meetings he said : "If only you will come up and see my horses" (which he knew were of no interest to my father) "I will come to church the following Sunday, no matter what may happen." He was surprised to see my father turn up about stable-time one day during the following week. They had a good look round the horses, including Warlaby, and, on saying good-bye, old Paddy grasped my father's hand and said : "Squire, I'll be there on Sunday, and for my sake you must have a fiver on Mr. 'Bob' Vyner's Punster in the Portland Plate at Doncaster next week." The following Sunday unfortunately was about the vilest day we had had for weeks, but sure enough Paddy turned up at the chapel at Danby. After the service he said to my father : "Now what about that fiver?" The governor had never had a bet in his life, but said in reply : "My son will put it on for me, and if it wins I'll make you a present of the lot." As it happened Punster was not in the first three.

'Some years later my father heard that Drislane was very ill and not likely to live. He ordered his dog-cart round at once and took up his chaplain. Finding Paddy in a favourable mood, he turned the padre on to him and after a couple of hours the latter came out. Then my father went into the bedroom to say good-bye. He found the poor old trainer

almost speechless but just strong enough to whisper "Good-bye, Squire, I'm running to win this time anyway." I believe he died next day. He was buried in the little Catholic churchyard at Danby and there was no tombstone put up for some time, so a subscription was raised by the trainers at Middleham. Needless to say it was instigated and headed by that most charitable man and prince of good fellows, Mr. M. D. Peacock. They chose a remarkable red Aberdeen granite stone, and it still stands as fresh and clean as the day it was erected. The chaplain at Danby has, amongst his duties, the care of this grave.'

Reverting to the astuteness of trainers, we find that so early as November 16th, 1589, one George Bradrigge, who was trainer to the Slingsbys of that day, wrote a letter to Mr. Henry Slingsby, telling of the difficulties he had had to overcome in connection with a match between two horses owned by sportsmen whose names are deep writ in the pages of northern sporting annals. As the letter is of very considerable interest apart from the astuteness of trainer Bradrigge, it is well worth giving here :

SIR,—My dutie promised. Theis may be to signifie unto your worshippe that your horse (God be praised) hath the verie good successe in his runninge with great credit, which I think on this more at large be certified unto you by Mr. James Tanckard (Tancred) his letter. But it so chanced that Mr. Vavasoure was not well which did staye his being their so that Mr. Metcalfe did argue and alledge that he had won the wager by reason neither your worshippe nor Mr. Vavasoure was their present according to the articles made. Yett in th' end, through much entreatye, he was contented they should rune. Also that Christopher Cave and Robert Anderson were in Lancashire at Mr. Middleton's, where, fynding him at home their message and did require him they myght be dispatched who answered that he would dispatche them next morning. When the morninge came Mr. Middleton sent for one of his men, whose name is Smith, who being come and having conferred with his master concerning the same, did advertyse his said master to the contrairie, so that in no wise he wolde be contented to scale, but in th' end he concluded with this answeare : that upo Monday after St. Andrewes daye he would send over his man Weston for that purpose and that all things sholde then be dispatched and finished. Moreover at our

beinge at the raise (race) Mr. Vavasoure's men and I went to Mr. Pepper, who in like manner refused to scale, saying that at the day appointed by Mr. Middleton to send his man too Weston he wolde be readye to be ther himself or else to send his deputie to perform all things that was covenante. Farther that I could not get any money of him by no meanes, for in truthe I alleged and said that your horse was to run that day and that your worshippe had appointed that monie which he ought (owed) you to be taken for the wager, so that I tolde him that I could not anywaie make shift onless he wolde paye it, but all wolde not prevaile. He saide he had a parcell of grounde that he wolde let you for tenne pounds by the year, which offer I did not refuse, but ymmediatelie went to vew the same, and so concluded to give him tenne pounds for one year, because I thought he both hade and wolde deferre you of your money, and that I thought yt was as good to take that in parte of payment as otherwyse. Thus ceasinge to trouble your worshippe any further, praying God for the prosperous estate of youre good health, I comytt you to the Lorde, his omnipotent proteccon.

KNARESBOROUGH : this 16th November, anno 1589—your obedient servannte to commande.

GEO. BRADRIGGE.

To the Right Worshippfull and approvd good Mr. Henrie Slingsbie, Esquier, at London, give theis.

And now to turn to another subject. 'Doping' allegations, or innuendoes, are not infrequent among the paddock sensation-mongers and suspicious 'know-alls,' who have a vivid imagination. This type of Turfite is rarely without a 'head-shake' or a wink, implying that he 'knows something,' that he's 'seen something,' and 'could expose something' if he had a mind. He usually adopts an air of mystery and stolid pretence of secrecy which develops into a more or less direct charge of improper conduct of one sort or another against owners, trainers, or jockeys. If a horse is seen to be sweating profusely, as some funky excitable animals do, if the saddling box door is secured to prevent Tom, Dick, and Harry from entering whilst a horse is being got ready for a race, if an uncertain animal with a temperament on some particular day surprises everyone by really going into his bridle and by 'putting it all in' and winning easily, then the headshakers begin to whisper about 'dope.' As a matter of

fact, I don't suppose one out of fifty trainers know of a 'dope' even if they wanted to use one, though it is said that a north country veterinary surgeon used to make up a preparation of his own, known as 'speedy balls,' which were in considerable demand twenty years ago amongst trainers. What they contained no one who used them knew. They may have been a mild dope in the sense of acting as does a morning bottle of 'fizz' to those who have had a 'night before.' I am quite certain, however, that there is very little doping in England. In Australia they seem to have adopted a not altogether new system, as witness the following from 'Fara-way' to *Horse and Hound* :

'Thanks to the alertness of one of the stipendiary Stewards at the Ascot (Sydney, Australia) meeting on 12th January (1927) a jockey named James Martin was seen to hand an electric battery to an attendant in the saddling enclosure after the decision of one of the events. As a result of an enquiry by the Stewards, Martin was disqualified for life, together with the owner and trainer, A. C. Craft, the attendant, W. Deaves, and the horse Prince Offa. According to a writer in "Australasian," the contrivance was a small compact hand dry battery, obviously intended for administering shocks. It was encased in vulcanite, with two protruding brass pins which, when pressed against an object, formed the contact. It could easily be carried in the palm of the hand, being about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. long by  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in. wide, and was fairly powerful.'

We know English horses *have* been doped ; it may be that occasionally men without much reputation or position at stake still resort to the practice. That there either is (or exists the opportunity for) a tithe of the cases of this mal-practice suggested by whispers, nods, winks, or the direct accusations of paddock busybodies and nobodies, we do not believe. Regarding this subject 'Audax,'<sup>1</sup> in his reference (February 1926) to the death in America of William Duke (who for some time trained in this country) tells a good story. It was imagined that Duke used to dope his horses prior to the Jockey Club ban on the practice, and, though quite innocent, he was supposed to hold the recipe of a 'wonderful bottle.' A well-known and very clever Newmarket trainer

<sup>1</sup> *Horse and Hound*.

wrote to a friend of 'Audax's' asking him to use his influence with Duke to send him a dope for a certain horse, which was useful but could not be relied on to do his best. Here is the story :

'Well,' said Duke, 'we will have some fun over this.' He got two capsules, and filled them up with nothing but water ; the horse had the capsules and won his next race in a canter. My Newmarket friend was delighted, and informed me that as he was running the horse again in ten days' time, would Duke send him two more capsules ? On receiving this request Duke said, 'Write and tell him the dope will last just over ten days.' Well, the horse won again, and the news leaked out at Newmarket as to what wonderful stuff Duke had for his horses. Perhaps we acted rather foolishly, although doping was allowed then, but anyway it was a good joke.

In quite recent times a trainer was 'warned off' for administering a dope by means of a hypodermic syringe (found in the horse's box) at Catterick, and in 1925 there was an enquiry into a suspected case of doping at Thirsk. Samples of the saliva of the horse, which it was thought had been doctored by an ex-Australian trainer, were taken, but no evidence was discovered to support the suspicion. Some of the Australians *did* at one time use dope in England I know for a fact, and very potent they were though in small compass. Before the administration of 'fillips' was banned by the Jockey Club one Australian gave me a tiny bottle, apparently containing some sort of bark. This had to be given to a horse either one or two hours before the race. To a lazy, sluggish, soft-hearted animal, the contents of the bottle were duly given, and, though he didn't win, he was close up, and certainly showed more enterprise than he had ever done before. There was no sweating or external signs of any description as the result of this dope.

Very different was the case in 1924 with the preparation used in South Africa. Writing on 8th February from Cape-town 'Springbok' gave a vivid picture of the manner in which horses were affected there. He said :

'Capetown is now interested in the somewhat unusual case of doping racehorses. The case is being tried by the

magistrates and the defendant is a coloured stable-boy. The charge against him is "malicious injury to property and of cruelty to animals." From the evidence which has so far been given it appears that the horse Cavalero was entered for a race at Kenilworth, and according to the trainer it was in good condition on the morning of the race. On Cavalero being walked to the course he noticed it was covered with dry sweat, and that it was going along with its head down. He allowed the horse to run, but it ran abominably. After the race he examined the horse and found it had a sort of relaxed appearance unusual for a fit horse. That night Cavalero was soaking wet with perspiration and was off his feed, which was a very unusual condition for him. The horse was then handed back to the owner. Cavalero, it is alleged, is not the only horse in the stable which has been interfered with. It would appear the Sir Abe Bailey's Exchange had been tampered with. According to the evidence, Exchange after running a bad race was seen to be sweating and twitching. Later, in the stable, the horse was examined and showed symptoms of having been drugged. The horse got worse, and next day ate nothing at all. It remained in this condition for twelve or thirteen days, and it would take three months to recover properly. Inquiries were made and the head stable-boy, George Williams, was arrested. The case against him of administering a drug to Exchange was proved, and he was sent to prison for six months with hard labour. Doping of racehorses seems to be fairly prevalent in South Africa. Not long ago a youth was sent to prison for four months for drugging a horse. What Capetown racegoers are now asking themselves is, "Who is behind these stable-boys?" Are they receiving monetary reward from some "hidden hand?" What is certain is that they are not doping their masters' horses because of the chance of any money they may earn in the betting market.'

Mr. George Lambton in *Men and Horses I Have Known* tells us how he was instrumental in 1903 in getting the English Jockey Club to take action to put an end to doping. 'In 1896,' he says, 'doping was in its infancy, and it was not

until about 1900 that it really began to be a serious menace to horse racing. By 1903 it had become a scandal, and the following year was made a criminal offence, the penalty being "warning off." The authority quoted has no doubt the Americans started the practice of doping, and when they came over to England there was no law against it, so Wishard and others, who made a study of various dopes and their effects on different horses, acted quite within their rights. Mr. Lambton discovered the evils of doping by buying a mare called Damsel II, which had beaten a fancied animal of his own. She was never any more use afterwards at racing, and even for the stud was ruined, producing a dead foal. Other cases of the danger and evil results of doping came to his notice, and Mr. Lambton, seeing that the practice was increasing, decided to do something to bring the matter to a head. Here is his own story as to the course he adopted and the results :

‘At that time I had in my stable some of the biggest rogues in training, and I told the stewards that I intended to dope these horses. They could see for themselves what the result was. The first horse I doped was a chestnut gelding called Folkestone. This horse had refused to do anything in a trial or a race. He was always last and would come in neighing. I first of all doped him in a trial. He fairly astonished me, for he jumped off and won in a canter. I sent him to Pontefract, where he beat a field of fourteen very easily, and nearly went round the course a second time before his jockey could pull him up. He won again the next day, was sold and never won again. I had told my brother, Lord Durham, who was not a steward of the Jockey Club at that time, what I was doing. So much did he dislike this doping that he was inclined to object to my having anything to do with it. But when I explained that my object was to open the eyes of the Stewards, he withdrew his objection, but begged me not to have a shilling on any horse with dope in him. To this I agreed.

‘I obtained six dopes from a well-known veterinary surgeon. They were not injected with a needle, but given out of a bottle. Their effect on a horse was astonishing.

I used five of them, and had four winners and a second. Not one of these horses had shown any form throughout the year. One of them, Ruy Lopez, who had previously defeated the efforts of the best jockeys in England, ran away with the Lincoln Handicap with a stable-boy up, racing as though he was the most honest horse in the world. At the end of that Liverpool Autumn Meeting I had one dope left. I had made no secret of what I had been doing, and Lord Charles Montague asked me to give him one of these dopes. He wanted it for a horse called Cheers, belonging to the Duke of Devonshire ; so I gave him my last one. Cheers had run badly all the year. The following week he beat a big field for the Markeaton Plate with the dope in him, including a horse of my own, Andrea Ferrara, who I very much fancied.

'By the following year doping was made a criminal offence, the penalty being "warning off." Some people think there is a great deal going on now, I don't believe it ; the penalty is too severe, although it is possible that there are trainers who will take the risk.'

In 1914 the Stewards of the Austrian Jockey Club officially adopted the same plan Mr. Lambton had done six or seven years previously and with the same object in view—to test the effect of dope. The horses experimented upon were non-existent from a speculative point of view.

There are some trainers to-day who are much more 'fussy' than others with their runners in the paddock immediately before a race. Perhaps it is not possible to be too careful as to the fit of the saddle and that girths, buckles, leathers, and bridle are secure and in order. There are, however, different methods of making the final toilet and preparation of horses about to take part in a race. Some trainers are quiet and composed, others are excited, irritable, and, as I have said, 'fussy,' as they run round hissing and sissing, shouting at the lad who holds the horse, sponging eyes and nostrils, washing out the horse's mouth, and so on. Nevertheless those most 'fussy' with all this ritual are perhaps less so than the training grooms in the early days of the Turf. I wonder how many readers know *Markham's Masterpiece*, first published in 1610? Therein we find



the following quaint advice as to the final preparation for running a horse :

‘Just as you are going to lead him dip the bit of his bridle in muscadine or alicant, and then, drawing off his muzzle, draw on his bridle. Then spread soft wax, such as shoemakers use, under your girth and saddle, which done put it gently on his back, so that he scarcely feels it on. Then spread a large white linen cloth over his saddle, and omit all his other clothes, which likewise being slightly girt, stick wisps under his girth or surcingles, but let them be very soft. Then cover him with some pieces of rich tapestry, or cloth of state, to make him show gallant, after which pour down his throat with a drinking horn one pint of muscadine, alicant, or, for want of either, canary.’

To-day some trainers are using motor vans to convey their horses to and from race meetings. There is nothing new about this except the petrol. In 1788 and onwards, when Eclipse was at stud, he was conveyed from Epsom to Cannons, Middlesex, in ‘his carriage.’ ‘The machine,’ says Whyte, ‘was drawn by two horses, and the groom was an inside passenger.’ Whyte adds a note : ‘We believe this to be a first instance in which a van drawn by horse now (*i.e.* 1840) generally in use was employed to carry a race-horse.’ In 1816 Mr. Terret of Worcestershire had a road-van made in which his horse Sovereign was taken to Newmarket to run in the Two Thousand Guineas. Twenty years later Lord George Bentinck sent Elis from Goodwood to Doncaster (250 miles) in a van he had specially made for the purpose. So heavy was it that it required relays of six post horses along the road to draw it the eighty miles a day it travelled. John Kent tells us (*Racing Life of Lord George Bentinck*) that Lord George later used an improved van which caused less of a sensation in the villages through which it passed. The first cumbersome vehicle was thought by the astonished ruralists to contain either wild animals or a cargo of criminals on their way to execution.

Lazy Lanercost, after winning the Ayr Gold Cup, travelled by road-van to Richmond, Catterick, Doncaster, and Liverpool, went by sea to Glasgow, and continued his peregrinations to Cupar, Kelso, and Dumfries. On the way to the

latter place one of the horses attached to the van broke down, so the journey was considerably delayed. As the vehicle was hardly big enough for him, and as he had been a prisoner in it day and night for some time, this was all the more serious. So stiff was he when he *did* arrive, that Noble could hardly get him to trot, let alone canter.

Many of us have seen the van which the late William I'Anson had constructed at Cambridge in 1857 to carry Blink Bonny to win the Derby of that year. Later (in 1864), Blair Athol made the same journey from Malton to bring fresh Derby honours to Yorkshire. He also travelled to Paris in the same van and eventually, when the present William I'Anson went to train at Newmarket, he gave the van to his sister Mrs. Dawson, who was then living at Wold Cottage, Malton. In March 1902 it went to Scarborough, where it is still to be seen.

Of course, in pre-railway days practically all horses went on foot to fulfil their engagements, and many are the records we have of wonderful distances they covered. For instance Isabella—by Comus-Shepherdess—(bred by Mr. Gascoigne) was thus referred to in *The Sporting Magazine* :

‘The extraordinary part of the mare’s performance is the ease and expedition with which she travelled from place to place, never once being prevented by illness from running her several races, or having the slightest cough during her journeys, which shows her to possess a most uncommonly sound and strong constitution. In the course of three months, in which she ran in 1824, she travelled on hard roads 510 miles ; and in the three months in which she ran last year she travelled 408 miles ; and what is more extraordinary, she has not now either splint or windgall on any of her legs.’

Then, in 1836, John Scott sent Cyprian by road from Malton to win the Oaks on 20th May. Immediately after doing so she started off for Newcastle-on-Tyne, and there won the Northumberland Plate on 22nd June.

Endless other instances could be quoted of racehorses covering tremendous distances on foot, but as the method of transit was the common one there would be no point in extending the list further than the foregoing illustrations

of the different conditions which obtained a century or less ago.

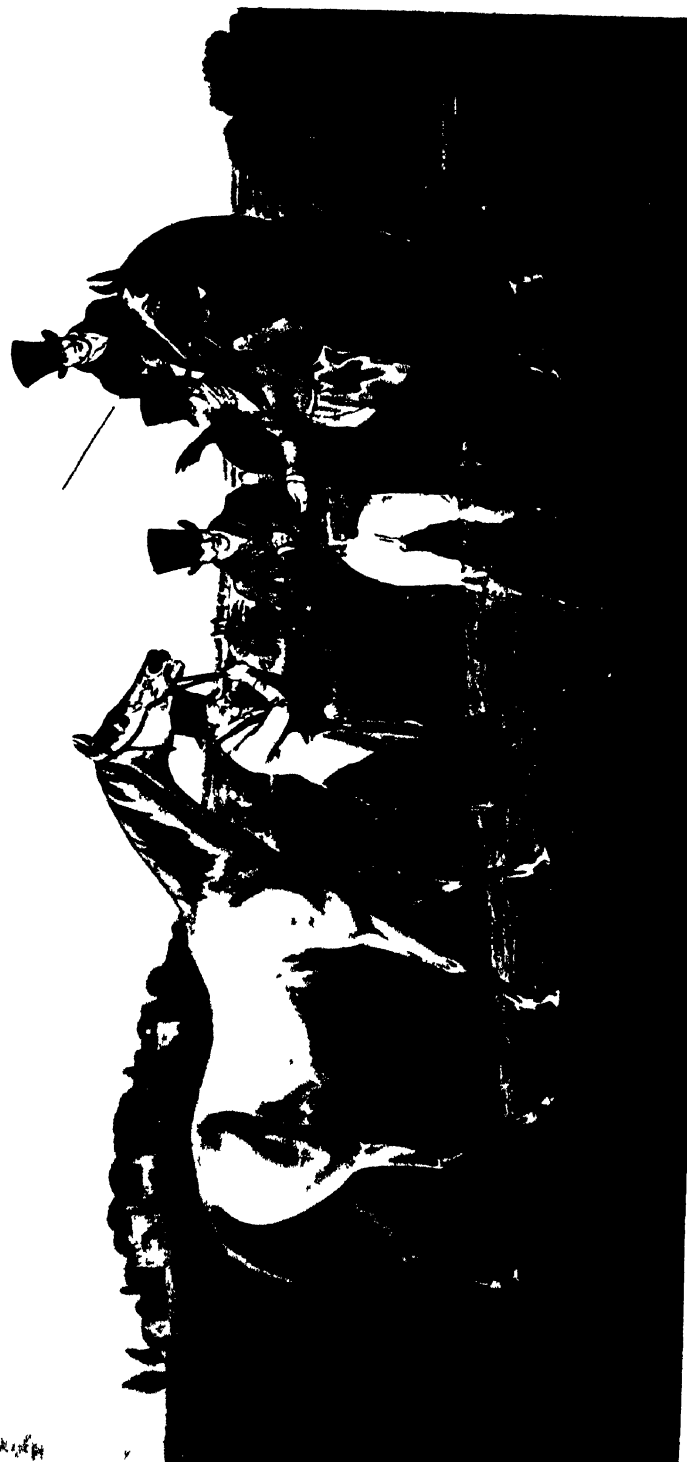
The late Mr. Adam Scott frequently sent his horses long distances by road to some of the northern country meetings to which the railway service from Whittingham is bad. Mr. 'Mike' Rimington and his wife often made their racing tours in quite old-fashioned style when the former had a 'chaser or two in training in 1924-25. I fancy they saved a good many railway fares and looked after the horses themselves, Mr. Rimington riding them in their races.

The long delays on some railways and the small consideration extended to those running racehorses will probably result in the motor horse-van increasing in popularity and numbers in the near future. Such vehicles will be especially useful in the case of nervous, highly strung horses, which 'funk' and 'sweat' and take a lot out of themselves during the processes of boxing, un-boxing, shunting, travelling, and so forth. Some railway companies have yet to realise the immense revenue which accrues from the conveyance of racehorses, some have advanced but little in their vision and arrangements in this connection during the last two decades, though the London & North Eastern (formerly N.E.R.) no longer puts every obstacle in the way of getting racehorses and racing crowds to their destination as it used to do. This was in the early days of railways, and up to the '60's, when there was a Quaker directorate which was openly opposed to the Turf and considered they were aiding and abetting the work of the devil by being a party to the carriage on their lines of both horses and those who went to see them run. Despite apathy in some directions there is not, at any rate, open opposition. Occasionally one imagines there is evidence of something closely allied, though it is really only stupidity. Here I would add that the representatives of the L. & N.E.R. who attend all the northern race meetings are most obliging, patient, and anxious to be of assistance to trainers.

The following paragraph from the *Sporting Chronicle* of 8th March, 1927, is a pointer of the times :

'Mervin Scott, son of J. Scott, the Wantage trainer, is not often seen in the saddle as he has set up in business with a motor

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LARLY DAYS



horse-box which he drives to the various meetings. At Shirley yesterday he drove Wild Duck to the meeting, and at his father's request rode the mare. She proved successful.'

The radical alteration in the methods of feeding and training racehorses has had a natural influence upon both the terminology used upon our race-courses and behind the scenes at training quarters. We now no longer hear of horses referred to as 'coursers,' or of them being 'in sweats,' 'breaking their grease,' or of the making of 'horse bread' (with eggs and wine and what-not). All this, and much more, enters into neither the calculations nor conversations of trainers, so that the appropriate terms associated with the obsolete systems have fallen into disuse and are now forgotten. These applied to what may be described as the science of training, connected with which, as with the actual running of horses in their public engagements, there is still a distinct vocabulary, much of which has been handed on by one generation to that which followed it. Though the following list does not contain a complete catalogue of the jargon of the Turf, in it will be found many of the most commonly used expressions, which in a few words convey a good deal. Regarding the application of the title of 'Capt. (or Johnny) Armstrong,' with all it implies, I have made an extended examination of its derivation in the chapter on Jockeys. Here is the glossary of racing phrases—many of them as familiar to our grandfathers as to trainers and Turfites of to-day—which I have compiled during the last hour on this day in March in the year of grace 1927 :

*Armstrong, Captain* (See 'Johnny Armstrong').

*Asking the question* : A trial of speed and staying powers in which all (or certain) of the horses taking part in the gallop are really 'asked' what they can do. A trial, the result of which will be seriously noted, as contradistinctive to a mere 'rough up' gallop, which is only to a certain extent a guide to the trainer as to the respective merits of the horses under his charge.

*Back teeth pulled out* : A horse is said to have its 'back teeth pulled out' when it is thought to have been 'pulled' by a jockey and restrained from winning.

*Boys, The* : The three-card trick, pick-pocket, dishonest Turf flotsam and jetsam.

*Busy* : A horse is said to be 'busy' when it is known to be out to win and expected so to do. Conversely when a horse is described as 'not busy' the inference is that it is not being backed, and is not expected (or wanted) to win.

*Buying money* : Laying heavy odds on a favourite.

*Chucked it* : If at some stage in a race a horse is seen to 'shut up' and refuse to gallop his best, he is said to 'chuck it.'

*Claiming the five* : Five pounds weight allowed to apprentice jockeys until they have ridden their complement of winners and deducted from the burden carried by horses they ride.

*Cosh* : The training stable (and jockey's) term for any stick, whip, or cane carried on horseback.

*Dead meat* : Horses which are not out to win are so described.

*Doddled it* : A horse which wins a race very easily is said to 'doddle it.'

*Dog horse* ; A 'tucked up,' jaded, over-trained animal in poor condition is spoken of as 'a dog horse' or 'a knacker.' The term may also be applied in derision to an animal not lacking in condition but outclassed.

*Dogs barking it* : A stable secret which has leaked out and is common property is referred to as 'the dogs are barking it.' 'A street-corner tip' is an alternative phrase.

*Dolls* : Hurdles placed across certain gallops to close them to horses and horsemen for a time, or hurdles used to mark certain turns on a course or on 'gallops' (*i.e.* training grounds). Correct pronunciation, doles.

*Done up* : The conclusion of 'stable time,' when the horses have been 'bedded down,' the straw at the edges platted and 'set fair.' To be 'done up' is to be ready for the head-lad to come round after feeding and lock the boxes up.

*First lot, second lot, and so on* : The string of horses taken out before breakfast (or the first string) is called 'the first lot' and so on.

*Funking* : A nervous horse, or one which sweats with the excitement or anticipation of a race in store is said to be 'funking.'

*Gone down* : When horses have left the paddock for the starting point. Also an unsuccessful bet.

*Good thing* : A race which looks 'a gift' for a certain animal—a racing certainty—which certainties when they fail to materialise are referred to as 'a good thing come undone.'

*Half-speed gallop* : A gallop in which horses are not 'fully extended.' Training work which is faster than an ordinary canter.

*Head pulled off* : An alternative term for 'back teeth pulled out.'

*Hot-pot* : A horse which has been heavily backed.

*Inside* : Tattersall's Ring.

*Jady* : A horse which is not necessarily a 'slug' but is 'humoury' (not to be confused with 'humours') and liable to 'go off' after reaching the top of its form. A moody animal, one which does not 'go into its bridle' at times and requires urging on (riding with the hands or giving a reminder or two with the cosh). Shakespeare uses this word, as do most of the old writers on horse management.

*Job* : To be 'on the job' is for a horse to be 'busy,' to be 'out,' *i.e.* backed and trying.

*Job, A* : When there is a betting commission being worked in connection with a horse it is said 'there is a job for him,' or 'it is a big S.P. job.'

*Johnny Armstrong* : The action of 'pulling' or restraining a horse.

*Jump in* : A horse which is only able to gallop (*i.e.* is 'useful' over) a certain distance, or is not required to run in races over that distance, is often kept at some point of the training ground and 'jumps in' with the other horses (which have been galloped further) and leads them for the conclusion of the distance.

*Jump off and go all the way* : To start at the same moment as other horses and keep with them over the whole of a certain distance.

*Kid* : An apprentice. One often hears the remark 'He isn't a kid's horse; he wants a man on his back.'

*Kidding* : A jockey who has something up his sleeve and sits still on his mount, or by some means deceives those riding against him, is said to be 'kidding.' He may also 'kid' to his horse by his tactics and come with a rush at the finish.

*Kip* : The stable boy's term for bed.

*Nappy* ('a bit') : A horse which is inclined to 'put in' an unexpected 'buck,' or 'fly jump'—an animal of uncertain temperament which requires 'watching a bit' and a boy on him who can 'sit tight' when occasion demands.

*Niggling* : The manual acts of the rider of a horse by which he conveys his desires. To niggle at a horse is the opposite to 'sitting still,' and means that the rider is asking his animal to make an increased effort. This same 'niggling' is one of the greatest arts in horsemanship and a part of the mysterious power (given to few) to 'ride with their hands.'

*Out* : A horse is said to be 'out' when it is known he is 'on the job.'

*Outside* : All other enclosures on a course save Tattersall's, which is 'inside.'

*Packet, parcel and bundle* : A considerable sum of money. To say a person 'won a packet,' etc., or 'had a parcel (or bundle)' on a horse, infers that a considerable sum has been won or laid.

*Penciller* : A bookmaker.



*Pipe-opener* : A gallop given to horses which are gross, 'fat in their insides,' a little short of work. The gallop on the morning of a race.

*Plater* : A term of semi-derision for horses which are only 'class' enough to run in selling plates.

*Plates* : Light racing shoes are called plates.

*Port and cave* : An animal which shows nervousness or impatience to be 'off' or at feeding time, by scraping the ground with its fore-feet, is said to 'port and cave.'

*Put all in* : A horse which does not 'put all in' is one which does not do its best—a slug, lazy horse, a rogue.

*Quartered* : The term applied to the brushing of the hair contrary to its natural 'lie' on a horse's quarters into stars or other decorative diagrams.

*Ran loose* : A horse which has run without any stable money on it.

*Rogue* : An undependable animal which through vice, temperament, or other cause, shows 'in and out running' and does not always reproduce its true form. The term is often unfairly applied.

*Rogue's Badge* : Blinkers attached to a hood. These prevent a horse from seeing except directly in front. They are used on animals liable to 'run out.' Such animals are by no means always rogues.

*Roost* : To 'set about' a horse, to 'roost' him, is to use the 'cosh' freely on a lazy or refractory animal which 'will not put all in.'

*Said his piece* : An animal which has shot its bolt and, so far as winning a race or trial is concerned, is 'out of the picture.' The expression probably originates from a child having said its piece (*i.e.* poem) and concluded his or her part of an entertainment.

*Seller* : A selling race—one in which the winner is bound to be offered at public auction.

*Sellinger* : The St. Leger.

*Shouting* (all over bar) : A foregone conclusion or a race obviously won before the post is passed.

*S.P.* : Starting price. The odds offered by bookmakers at the start of a race.

*Stone cold* : A horse which either during, or at the end of, a gallop, has obviously 'said its piece.' One frequently hears both stable boys and jockeys say 'Mine was stone cold before I got to the distance,' or 'I was stone cold before we'd gone four furlongs.'

*Stripped* : To strip a horse is to take off his clothing, either in his box or before a gallop. Gentle exercise work is done with hoods and quarter-pieces on, but when horses are to be 'asked the question' they are stripped.

*Stumer* : A horse which is 'dead meat,' which has not been 'trying'—which was not 'out'—*i.e.* 'a stiff'un.'

*Tack* : Bridles, saddles, and martingales are called 'tack.' Stable boys speak of cleaning their tack. They often refer also to their grooming kit—body-brush, dandy-brush, wisp, and rubber—as 'tack' or 'tackle.' In Yorkshire both are frequently spoken of as 'gear'—an old word for horse furniture and domestic goods.

*Tail-going* : It is believed—and there is some truth in it—that when a horse during a race 'swishes' its tail with a circular motion that it is in distress and will take little further part in the actual contest.

*Telling the tale and lug-pulling* : Those who worm out information as to the intentions of 'the heads' and advise 'punters' what to back are said to 'tell the tale' or practise 'lug-pulling.'

*Tick-tack* : The agents of bookmakers who, by a code of manual signals, inform those who employ them of happenings in the betting rings which influence the odds offered.

*Top-weight* : The animal carrying the heaviest weight in a handicap.

*Useful* (usually prefaced by 'a bit') : A horse of which something is expected, an animal which either 'at home' or in public (*i.e.* on the race-course) has shown some form and a turn of speed. Such an animal is referred to as being 'a bit useful.'

*Well in* : A horse which has been leniently treated by the handicapper ; *i.e.* one which has not as much weight to carry as some authorities imagine past performances called for.

*Win ten minutes* : A horse which is thought to have a more than ordinary chance of success is referred to as likely to 'win it ten minutes.'

## CHAPTER IV

### JOCKEYS.

IF these are days of very intimate journalism and hyper-criticism, when it is not only known how often men in the limelight change their socks but whether they display what is considered good taste in the selection of them, it is also an age of grovelling, almost toadying, and sycophantic jockey laudation and admiration. Those whose affection for racing is correctly centred all admire clever horsemanship, but the present-day tendency to place successful jockeys on pedestals and fall down and worship them is just a little nauseating to some of us. Although the Duke of Cleveland used to have Chifney stay with him at Raby Castle, jockeys at that period were generally looked upon and treated as servants (before the days of the first John Singleton, the pioneer of professional jockeys, they were usually their masters' grooms)—who wore their master's livery with his crest on their buttons. It was the same with the early trainers. They were described in parish registers, when they married and died, as 'training grooms.' No kid glove, patent leather boots, spats, apricot-coloured socks, silk shirts, or luxurious motor-car entered into their calculations. Jockeys often walked (as the late John Osborne told me he often did when a lad) from one race meeting to another with their saddles strapped on their backs, and slept in loose-boxes in hotel yards with the horses they 'did.' To-day it is all different. Leading jockeys and footballers are lionised even more than the heroes of the prize ring and the most accomplished professional coachmen were in the era when the highest in the land sought the society of the one and very successfully emulated the other. On the whole our leading jockeys stand all the corn they get with a restraint and balance which surprises some of us and shows their good sense.

I remember on one occasion being asked to join a party at dinner in Town. Someone asked the host to invite a certain jockey, then much in the public eye, to our table. The giver of the feast—a member of the Jockey Club—quietly replied, ‘I have never seen any good purpose in bringing field-daisies into a conservatory.’ There was a moral in the rejoinder!

It is not the honest admiration and congratulations of men of culture and good breeding which are liable to give jockeys swelled heads, make them above themselves, and eventually utterly destroy them, but the fawning, toadying adulation of spongers, those with axes to grind—the bloodsucking leeches who batten on to the boys just ‘arriving’ and follow them with the relentless persistency with which a hungry stoat pursues a rabbit. The stoat bides its time, riding a waiting race, and when at last the half mesmerised rabbit is fully in its power—well the poor animal literally ‘gets it in the neck,’ and is then bled white and left.

The cruellest thing of all is the fate of many an apprentice whose star is in the ascendant after riding a prominent winner or two. He is photographed and ‘written up,’ his hand is shaken by all sorts and conditions of folk he doesn’t know, and had better not know. There is a rush to get into the same carriage with him at railway stations, lots of very questionable ‘gents’ (quite another species from gentlemen) offer him ‘good advice’ and proffer eternal friendship. When he loses his allowance the star often comes rapidly tumbling down from the skies; the idol has feet of clay again; he is left high and dry and forgotten by the aforementioned ‘gentry,’ who have found other fish to fry—or should I say other pigeons to pluck, or another orange to suck? After all, these apprentices are only children, many of them from very poor homes, and there is small wonder they fall victims to the blandishments so many of us see year by year being fired as a barrage by those whose society they would be well advised to shun as they would that of the occupants of a smallpox hospital.

Was it John Day who once said at Lincoln on Handicap day, ‘Just look at all those featherweight babes going out to ride. Why, they’d every one of them be far better at school

than trying to ride racehorses on which they'll all be only passengers, and trying to avoid the "boys" who'll demoralise them unless they're watched like children in a nursery.'

Funnily enough the word jockey, which now sets the hearts of a certain class palpitating as though they were about to be ushered into the presence of royalty, had originally no complimentary significance. Taplin in his *Sporting Dictionary* (1803) tells us :

'To say in one district that any man is "a good jockey" means no more than that he is a good horseman. In another to say he is "quite a jockey" is to communicate an idea that he is very little, if any, better than a swindler, and exceedingly well qualified to jockey any person with whom he has a transaction. Horse dealers, till within the last half century, passed under the denomination of jockeys in every market town and country fair in the kingdom.'

I have referred to the first John Singleton as being the pioneer of professional jockeys as we know them to-day. 'The Druid' says : 'The history of jockeys may be said to commence with its John Singleton,' and this seems an appropriate place to say something about him and to endeavour to clear up the confusion which has been perpetuated by successive generations, who have apparently blindly followed each other without making any effort to elucidate what has long been a mystery—'the mystery of the three jockeys John,' we might call it.

There were three Singletons with the Christian name of John, who each made a name for himself as a jockey. It would have been easier for successive generations of Turf historians, and would have made less confusion and more accuracy in Turf history, if the parents of the second and third Johns had chosen either St. Paul, St. Peter, or St. Thomas as their patronymic.

However they didn't, and so it is, and so must it be for all time, that the triumvirate of Johns will be a puzzle to those who are interested in the story of the Turf past. Strangely enough it seems impossible now to discover the exact relationship (if any) of the second John to his namesake No. 1. Personally, though he seems to have dropped

into the Singleton county and to have succeeded the first John Singleton in his professional work, I am inclined to think his family had no connection whatever with the East Yorkshire Singletons with whom these notes mainly deal, though Sir Theodore Cook suggests<sup>1</sup> John No. 2 was a nephew of John No. 1. I have had parish registers searched, and made exhaustive enquiries, but cannot substantiate this.

Let us first fly to John Orton's *Turf Annals* for what he has to tell us regarding the Singleton jockey trio :

' Mr. John Singleton, sen.—This eminent rider, who in his day was esteemed the finest horseman of the Turf, was born at Melbourne, near Pocklington, Yorkshire, in the year 1715, the register of his baptism in the parish church being there recorded : "John, son of John Singleton, of Melbourne, baptised May the 10th, 1715." The father must have been a clever person, for he supported a wife and nine children on the small wages of fourpence per day. On his death the family was dispersed, and the subject of this memoir was hired at the age of ten years, along with other boys, to tend cattle on Ross Moor, a large bleak common belonging to Melbourne and several adjoining townships. From thence he had a view of the Wold Hills, about eight miles distant, where he heard racehorses were kept, and boys to ride them ; this appears to have suggested the idea of racing in the minds of him and his companions, and induced them to catch the young horses on the common, which they raced against each other, but being caught in the act and corrected for it, he, for once in his life, levanted, and was found early the next morning at the stable door of Wilberforce Read, Esq., who being in want of a boy engaged him on the splendid terms of board and lodging, which was sleeping in the stables and eating in the kitchen when there was anything to get.

' Perhaps some notice of Mr. Read would not be amiss. He was a gentleman of good family with very slender portion, which was expended in stocking a farm rented under the Earl of Carlisle, at Grimthorpe, near Pocklington, a place adjoining the Yorkshire Wolds, then unenclosed ; an extensive tract of fine elastic turf formed by nature for eques-

<sup>1</sup> *A History of the English Turf.*

trian sports, on which both horse and rider equally rejoiced. The neighbourhood was, of course, a sporting one ; every village had its annual feast, and every feast a race ; the smallest prize brought a number of competitors to the post. No wonder this gentleman caught the epidemic of the country. He soon changed his bullocks for brood mares, and his calves for colts, which he trained himself. This passion for a racehorse, added to a prejudice for his own breed, had at this time nearly brought him to his last stake, yet under every difficulty he still kept up the appearance of a gentleman, and though often hard spurred and whipped by that severe jockey Necessity, he never swerved from the course of honour. His farm produced hay and oats for his horses, and barley for the bread on which he and his frugal household subsisted. He was sanguine enough to think he should be able to pay his rent from the winnings of his racehorses, and in consequence was much in arrear when Singleton came to his stable door. From this day began a connection which lasted nearly half a century, and a friendship which only ended with their lives. Both are buried in the same church. There is room to speculate what secret cause attracted these two worthies and formed a union from materials apparently so dissimilar. The one by birth and education of a rank vastly superior, moving in the highest circles, and endued with a morbid sensibility, fearful of losing caste ; the other a poor starved ragged orphan. There was nothing in common except a love for horses and a want of cash, which perhaps the gentleman only felt.

‘ The lad was delighted with the terms of his first engagement, he had got upon a racehorse ; hunger, cold, and all the hardships of the past were forgotten, he only saw the bright prospects of the future. There was plenty of riding at the feasts, where he soon distinguished himself, and partook of the good cheer stirring on these occasions as a reward for riding ; there was no money. The prize contended for being only a saddle or a bridle, left little for the owner of the horse and nothing for the rider except the laurels of victory, fit emblem of fame, leaves without fruit. While yet a child in years, he became noted for his seat in the saddle and judg-

ment in riding. A farmer, delighted with him for winning a bridle (worth perhaps half-a-crown) at three or more four mile heats, made him a present of a sheep which his master agreed to keep for him in lieu of wages. The produce of this ewe in a few years amounted to a dozen or more, when an event occurred to change the system.

‘From riding all sorts of horses, the genius of Singleton soon discovered the superiority of those which had a cross of the Arab over the old English racer, and advised his master to put his mares to a stallion of this kind, but neither of them had any money, when Singleton gave up his sheep for the purpose, and Mr. Read agreed to give him £5 per annum for wages. One mare was put to a horse from Hampton Court Stud (Mr. Gallant’s Smiling Tom) which produced a filly called Lucy, which won the Subscription over Hambleton in 1736, beating a large field. In the early part of the following year she, their only hope, being amiss, was beaten. Winter was approaching, cash scarce, when Singleton planned to take her into the north, and set off for Morpeth, distant 120 miles from Grimthorpe, with only 10s. 6d. in his pocket for expenses, acting the part of groom, stable-boy, and jockey, in a strange distant place, where he knew no one, and when asked from whence he came, he said Grimthorpe. Where was Grimthorpe? it was near Pocklington. Where was Pocklington? near York. He was laughed at for coming so far with a small slender filly as she appeared when compared with her competitors. At this moment, preparing to saddle and mount, all to be done by himself, then a youth harassed by cares and fears, to his great joy a butcher from Pocklington turned up, who came to back the mare, for which purpose he had ridden all night, except for resting himself and his horse for a short time under a haystack. And being a stout, sturdy fellow, he soon cleared a way, assisted him to mount, took the odds she was not distanced, then backed her to win to the extent of his purse. The Plate was secured, with two others at Stockton and Sunderland, and this laid the foundation for the future success of both Read and Singleton. Mr. Read bred several winners, and a filly which the Marquis of Rockingham purchased, engaging Singleton at the same



time at £40 per annum ; a great advance from £5 of which twenty years was then due, for which Mr. Read gave his bond. Success appears to have departed with Singleton, for though Mr. Read continued his stud and his training, yet when Singleton came to reside on his property he found his old master nearly in the same state in which he first knew him, his stud from want of proper crossing was blood without bone, and his farm without any other stock ; he therefore invited the old gentleman to dinner, showed him the bond, with twenty years arrears of interest, then threw it into the fire and persuaded him to change his high bred colts for sheep and cattle, thus enabling him to pass his last years in comfort.

‘ For several years before Singleton left Mr. Read he had a great part in the riding of the county, and was so successful that he had purchased estates in the adjoining township of Great Givendale, the scenes of his early struggles and difficulties in life. About the year 1751 he went to reside at Newmarket, where the Marquis of Rockingham had a large racing establishment, which he placed under the superintendence of Singleton, and engaged him to train and ride all his horses which ran in the South ; but during the winter months the young stock were prepared and made ready for going into work at Swinton,<sup>1</sup> near Wentworth House (the Marquis’s seat), Yorkshire, by one Lund, and at the conclusion of the Newmarket Spring meetings, when the horses’ engagements were run out there, and they were intended to run for stakes at Doncaster and York (of both of which meetings the Marquis was a great supporter), the horses were sent under Singleton’s inspection to a place called Thixendale, near Malton, where Singleton had purchased two farms, built stables and other conveniences thereon for training, which he considered the best ground for the purpose of any in the kingdom ; and from this place they not unfrequently departed to win many of the best stakes and defeat most of the first rate horses of the day in Yorkshire. The Marquis of Rockingham was one of the best supporters of the British Turf, which he patronised both at Newmarket and in the

<sup>1</sup>W. Smallwood now trains here.

country ; and such was his regard and esteem for Singleton that he employed the first artists of the day to paint the subject of this memoir, riding many of his favourite horses, and gave several of these pictures to Singleton, who appears to have been treated more as a humble friend than a servant.

‘After the great race between Bay Malton, Herod, Turf, and Askham over the Beacon Course at Newmarket First Spring Meeting, 1767, for 500 guineas, the Marquis ordered a gold cup to be made, on which the figures of Bay Malton and his rider are richly chased, with the pedigree and performances of that celebrated horse engraved thereon, also a statement that it was offered and not accepted, to run any horse, giving him 7 lb. either over the flat for speed, or over the six mile course for stoutness, and that he presented this cup to John Singleton, the rider of Bay Malton. Singleton at the same time received a silver salver, on which are engraved all the above horses and their riders contending in the race, from an eminent silversmith, who, though he lost his money on the race, sent it as a mark of his admiration of his riding.

‘He continued at Newmarket till the year 1774, when he resigned his green jacket in favour of Christopher Scaife, who had married one of his nieces. During his residence at Newmarket he rode many of the great races besides those in which the Marquis was engaged, and also kept and started several horses in his own name and that of his confederate, Mr. Ottley, and was so successful that he educated and provided for many of his poor relatives, besides purchasing some valuable farms and the major part of the township of Great Givendale. On this latter he built a house and stables, and on leaving Newmarket came to reside there, breeding a few horses which he ran in the country, but without his usual success, which he attributed to being unable through age and infirmities to give them that attention he had formerly done. In November 1769 he married Mrs. Jackson, widow of Peter Jackson, a rider of some note, and the nephew of Thomas Jackson, one of the best horsemen of that day. She was a person of some attainments, and the nobility and gentry who

attended the Newmarket meetings, called upon Singleton to see his stud and the ladies to taste Mrs. Singleton's cakes and home-made wines, for which she was celebrated.

' In 1774 they came to reside upon his estate at Great Givendale, where he supported the character of a country gentleman, keeping a hospitable house, respected by his neighbours, and beloved by his dependents. He died in January 1793, leaving a widow and four children, two of them sons, of one of whom a short memoir is given. His widow survived him a few years, and is buried near him. His posterity possess the estate, with several pictures and other memorials of the Turf in olden time, depicting and illustrating the stirring scenes in which he moved. They also appear to inherit a little of his spirit, breeding and starting a racer now and again in a quiet way ; and one of them distinguishes himself as a gentleman jockey. Singleton appears to have been treated more as an humble friend than a servant, and that he deserved it by his faithful services no greater proof can be given than that he had only two masters during half a century, and his attachment to both forms an honourable trait in his character. From the pictures now extant of Singleton, he appears to have been about middle size, with a broad chest, a strong arm, and a quick eye, to which may be added a cool head and nerves, which nothing could shake, for in the last years of his life he could lift his full glass of wine without a tremor. See him mounted for the race, see him going out to course, observe the set out, the condition of his grey hounds and his hunter, the celebrated Merry Bachelor, his dress and gold lace hat, the costume of a squire of that day, and Pat would say " There goes a raal jintleman," and he was such by nature. He retired from a dangerous profession after fifty years spent in it, without a stain on his character. Thus is shown what genius and perseverance can perform. In his race through this life he started the last of the village, at the end he was the first.

" Act well your part, there all the honour lies."

' Mr. William Singleton was born at Newmarket in 1772, who in his youth went to sea, but afterwards returned to

Newmarket and resumed his father's profession, where he rode very frequently and attracted the very particular attention of the late Duke of Grafton ; but being of an unsettled disposition, he sold his estates, which he possessed at Meltonby, went abroad, and died at Jamaica. Another son, John, did not follow his father's profession and is now residing on his paternal estate at Givendale. Like the Edwards of the present day, the parent stock of the Singletons may be said to have been jockeys by nature. At the period that Singleton senior left Newmarket, in 1774, he had in his stables two nephews, William and John ; the former rode in public occasionally, but became too heavy for a jockey, and died young. The latter, Mr. John Singleton, jun., the family state to be the jockey who rode Lord Rockingham's br. f. Alabaculia, by Sampson, when she won *the first* Three-Year-Old Stake at Doncaster in 1776, afterwards named the St. Leger Stake. He afterwards went to France, where he had the management of the racing stud of the Duke of Orleans, father to Louis Philippe, present King of the French. He returned to England previous to the Revolution, and resided a short time at Newmarket, and was afterwards " mine host " of the Cross Keys Inn at Dringhouses, near York.

' Prior to his going to France, he married a Miss Lund, the daughter of Mr. Lund (before noticed) groom to the Marquis of Rockingham, by which marriage he had a son, who was born in France, and was also named John Singleton. This third John Singleton was intended by his father to follow the medical profession, being apprenticed to Mr. Lund, his maternal uncle, a surgeon at Sheffield ; but the ruling spirit threw " physic to the dogs " and, like his great uncle, ran away to Newmarket, and went into the Duke of Bedford's stables, under his grace's trainer, Mr. Stephenson, where he soon came out as a rider of great promise, and was occasionally employed by the late Earl Fitzwilliam, for whom he won the Doncaster St. Leger, on Orville. The budding promise which the younger Singleton gave of arriving at a first rate eminence, Providence, however, willed should never reach fruition ; for he only survived his first St. Leger victory but a few months, as he died at Newmarket in December 1802,

at the age of twenty-six years, highly respected and esteemed by the noblemen and gentlemen who employed him and lamented by all his acquaintances.'

In 1899 a pamphlet was published at Pocklington on the Singleton family. This consisted of a reprint of Orton's biographical matter (contained in his *Turf Annals*) with the following addition :

' At Givendale House, in the pretty, quaint old sitting-room, looking to the garden wall where Wilberforce as a schoolboy came to seek for peaches, are the medallions of the Marquis and Marchioness of Rockingham, the china jug, and the handsome carved chimney-piece presented by the Marquis, the same as one he had in Wentworth House, and one also in the Old Talbot in Malton, in room No. 18. The whip which John Singleton rode his races with is still preserved in the breakfast-room, along with pictures of the owner and some of the horses he rode—one of Atlas, got by Babraham, who was son of the Godolphin Arabian.

' Under a picture of the Godolphin Arabian, in the entrance, over the dining-room door at Givendale House is the following inscription :

' This extraordinary foreign horse became a private stallion as soon as he was landed, and got a greater number of fine horses of just temper with superior speed than ever any Arab did. He was the sire of Duke Dismal, Bajazet, Babraham, Phoenix, Dormouse, Regulus, Skewball, Sultan, Blank, Slug, Noble, Tarquin, Blossom, ye Godolphin Geldings, Shepherdess, Aunt, and several other runners, besides stallions and brood mares in the greatest esteem in England, Scotland, and Ireland. He made his exit at Gogmagogg<sup>1</sup> Hills, December, 1753, in the 29th year of his age.'

' *Francha, Leale, et Oge.*'

In *The Yorkshire Gazette* of 2nd April, 1774, occurs the following notice : ' Found dead in bed at Grimthorpe, near Pocklington, Wilberforce Read, Esq., formerly well known on the Turf, and equally respected as a gentleman and a sportsman, and was the original patron of the famous Mr. John Singleton.'

<sup>1</sup> Gogmagogg Hills, near Cambridge, belongs to the Duke of Leeds.

‘The cottage at Melbourne where John Singleton, senior, was born, was standing up to a few years ago but is now (1899) pulled down.’

Some years ago Mr. Stephen Scrope made exhaustive enquiries at Pocklington regarding the family and discovered that early Turf recorders were not accurate as to their dates, which, by the way, successive writers have unquestionably copied. Mr. Scrope, in a recent letter to me, says :

‘Old John Singleton was born in 1715, at Melbourne, and died (so his kinsfolk told me) at Pocklington in 1799, not in 1796 as is sometimes stated. He won his first big race for Mr. Read on the grey mare Rachel, in the Gold Cup, Hambleton, in 1732, and was soon recognised as the best jockey in England. He later rode and trained for Lord Rockingham, but he always rode for Mr. Read in preference to Lord Rockingham or anyone else. When he retired from the saddle with (for those times) a very considerable patrimony, he devoted himself at Pocklington to hunting and coursing. He rode Bay Malton in nearly all his races. We have an excellent picture of him at Boodles, aged 83, on a celebrated hunter called Merry Bachelor and attended by two greyhounds on the top of the Wolds near Sledmere. He died at Pocklington in 1799 and was buried there, leaving £8,000.

‘The second John Singleton was born in 1732 and died in 1826. He was not nearly so famous as the elder John Singleton, though he did win the St. Leger on Alabaculia<sup>1</sup> for Lord Rockingham, and of course many other races. Neither John Singleton ever rode Eclipse. This mistake is made in Sheardown’s *Historical Notices of Doncaster Races*. Young and old John Singleton were not related in any way.’

The second John Singleton’s death was recorded in *The Sporting Magazine* (vol. 67, p. 166). There is an obvious anachronism regarding which a footnote is appended, whilst the mistake as to Singleton riding Eclipse (which he never did) was sent forth to be perpetuated up till this day—or at any rate till Sir Theodore Cook in *Eclipse and O’Kelly* mentioned he could find no record of this jockey ever having

<sup>1</sup> See C. M. Prior’s *History of Racing Calendar and Stud Book*, p. 165.

been on Eclipse's back. Here is the obituary of John II. with all its inaccuracies :

' On Monday, 5th Dec. (1826) in Chester House of Industry, being in his 94th year, John Singleton, who rode for the Leger Lord Rockingham's brown bay filly, by Sampson, in 1776, being the first year that popular race was run, and which he won. Old John was of the Catholic persuasion. He was born at Kendal on 24th June in 1732, his father was a horse dealer ; John became a jockey at the age of sixteen and rode first at Kirby Lonsdale. During his sporting career, when about twenty, he rode a match between Sir W. Strickland and Sir ——— Frampton, on which occasion a song was published entitled *The Yorkshire Knights*.<sup>1</sup> He also, as before stated, rode the first winner of the St. Leger. He was the rider of Cyclops and jockeyed Eclipse in all the great races which that astonishing horse ran (*sic*). Singleton's last riding was at Chester in 1784. He at one time had raised sufficient money to buy a horse, which broke its leg in running at Burnswood. Leaving the Turf he set up as a horse dealer ; afterwards was horse-breaker and farrier. His wife having been indisposed for two years, he became reduced and first received a weekly allowance of 3s. from the parish board of Chester, on the 30th July, 1818, which he continued to do until the 24th May, 1821, when he was admitted into the house and remained there until his death. The old jockey used, with great glee, to recount his various and successful exploits on the Turf, and preserved his health and faculties almost unimpaired to within a few days of his demise.'

Having traced the history so far as possible of the three early jockeys named John Singleton, let us now return to the first, most famous, and Yorkshire John.

In *Saddle and Sirloin* 'The Druid' tells us of a visit to Givendale (near Pocklington), the home of the Singletons. 'The Druid' probably paid this visit somewhere about 1869. He says :

' A turn to the left brings us to the hamlet of Givendale, which lies among snug gardens and garths, on a great natural

<sup>1</sup> As this match took place thirty years before Singleton was born this is an obvious anachronism.

platform overlooking the Vale of York and its distant Minster towers. Mr. Singleton's holding comprises 640 acres, all on the Wold, and belonging to his mother and himself. It lies from 500 to 800 feet above the sea level, and on the range of the chalk hills, which extend to Langton Wold and straight across the East Riding to Filey. . . . There is no mistaking Mr. Singleton's homestead. To the left is the letting yard, where Mr. Boulton's voice is heard in the land as each first Wednesday after the 20th of August comes round, and the Leicester lambs and red and red-flecked shorthorns, headed by old Graceful, in the home garth make assurance doubly sure. . . . With these "musings by the way" we reached the far gallop in the plantations. It has been a time-honoured axiom that for every ten acres of Wold one should be planted for shelter. The belief has obtained to the full at Givendale, where the firs have been planted with no sparing hand, and a training gallop of nearly two miles cut through them. . . . There are many proud family relics of the past in that parlour—the silver cup with "Success to Foxhunting" on it, cases, and the goblet with horses' heads for handles which the Marquis of Rockingham gave his jockey Singleton for the riding of Bay Malton—and among them Etty's painting of a pheasant, and some equally vigorous heads will always be ranked as a memento of a very happy friendship, which only ended with his life.'

The goblet mentioned by 'The Druid' was sold by the late Mrs. E. M. Singleton (died Nov. 1926) at Christie's in 1920.

The father of the John Singleton whom 'The Druid' met, died in 1853 and was buried at Givendale. His daughter in 1866 married a well-known Durham sportsman, Mr. George Gregson, who was born in 1814, rode regularly as an amateur jockey till his marriage, was a great patron of cocking and coursing, and went on riding and shooting at his place, Warden Law, until 1898. He died in 1902, aged 88. It was his elder brother John (died 1877) who comes in for honourable mention as a horseman in 'Nimrod's' *Sporting Tours*.

So much for the first professional jockey and his namesakes.



To-day there are more 'ovations' than hostile 'demonstrations' awarded to jockeys by the untutored masses. What has always struck me is that whereas there is abundant and unstinted praise for the jockeyship of those who *win* races (particularly when the winners are well-backed), there are very few either able to see, or generous enough to admit, that some of those who have ridden *beaten horses* have actually shown more skilful horsemanship—brains, head, hands, and courage. Probably there *are* very few who have eyes, intuition, or knowledge to realise that the man on the bad, or tricky horse, or the boy closed in, or whose mount 'requires nursing' or 'kidding to,' is deserving of more admiration for getting where he did than the jockey on the winner for having won. Not unfrequently 'demonstrations' on jockeys returning to scale are entirely unwarranted and are impertinent hooliganism, testifying the ignorance of those who yell and 'boo.'

I remember a few years before the War the Leeds and Bradford crowds decided at each Wetherby meeting that whatever the local trainer and gentleman rider, Mr. Geo. Gunter, ran and rode must win. If he had run a jackass they would have made it favourite. Mr. Gunter *did* win his share of races at his home meeting, but when he came up against something better, or did not perhaps ride as well as usual, then the Leeds roughs decided 'He'd never tried a yard.' 'We've been robbed out of our — money,' and they showed what their opinions were by yelling like savages when 'Mr. George' arrived at the gate leading from the course to the paddock. Naturally he got rather tired of this, and for one or two meetings did not run a horse at all.

Occasionally jockeys have had to be escorted back to the weighing-room under police protection, but very rarely has a jockey ever been actually maltreated. They used to do queer things at some of the little country meetings, and I remember the late 'Bob' Adams (one of the finest riders I ever saw), telling me that once at Stokesley he won every race but one and on the next visit was equally unlucky. Either rightly or wrongly the Cleveland crowd decided that he 'wasn't on the job,' and after one race gave him such a

volley of stones and bottles that he was glad to slip away back from Seamer (where the old race-course was situated) to Stokesley town and take refuge in the stables at an inn-yard. Stokesley races have long since dropped out of the list, so have Bromley, where Charles Lawrence, another steeplechase jockey, was once struck full in the face with a brick whilst on the far side of the course. He was felled like a poleaxed ox.

I remember poor Seth Chandley once saying to me, 'I consider that the best race I ever rode was at "Ponty" (Pontefract). That's not a kid's course! I was on the favourite, top weight up, and came up against a hot pot, kept and readied for the occasion. I was beaten, but congratulated myself that I had never used such brains as God has given me to better advantage and never got more ready response from any horse I had ridden. Often I blamed myself after a race and knew I'd thrown chances away and might have won if I'd done different, but on this occasion I couldn't find the least fault with myself. A crowd of miners rushed on to the course when I was coming back from the paddock gate after being beaten, and I thought they were going to tear me to pieces. However, *I* got through and *they* didn't, though I heard them howling like hungry lions. "Ignorant beggars," I thought, "shows how much they know about jockeyship, or when a man's trying his damndest to beat something better than he's on himself."'

And Seth Chandley was right! It is those who have never been astride a horse and know nothing of the science of racing who yell the loudest when they lose, and have no word of praise for the jockeyship of those who don't make their ticket of commercial value. There is a vulgar saying in Yorkshire that 'pigs are either muck or money,' and the reputation of jockeys is not much less barometer-like.

Apropos of jockeys' reputations and the unintentional causes which sometimes influence the barometer, a curious incident occurred at Derby in February 1927. H. Cheshire had weighed out at the latter place to ride Poor Tom when W. Gurney also appeared in Mr. Robinson's colours. He claimed that he had been specially engaged some time ago to take the mount, unknown to Rimmell. Cheshire is the

stable jockey, and amid the subsequent arguing the Clerk of the Scales said, ' You can't *both* ride the horse—which of you is to take the mount ? ' Eventually Gurney weighed out, and won.

Such *contretemps* and misunderstandings are not frequent, though there are many precedents. I well remember a north country trainer with a bad memory engaging two jockeys for the same ' good thing ' and each of them insisting on having the ride, as they had both declined other mounts. There was nearly a fight over the colours in the dressing-room, and I am not sure that the jockey who was deposed didn't take the matter to the stewards.

Miss M. Adamson once engaged two amateur riders—Capt. J. Rogerson and Mr. P. Hogg—for one of her horses at Rothbury, and the matter required some little tact to put right.

In none of these cases was there any suspicion of the jockey deposed, but it was otherwise in Jerry's St. Leger, when it transpired that Harry Edwards was ' in the pocket ' of a big bookmaker and had been squared to stop the horse. Mr. Gascoigne (Jerry's owner) was knocked up in the early hours of the morning by his trainer to be told of the plan which had leaked out. He gave instructions that Edwards was not to know that he was suspected but that another jockey was to be found in the meantime and told to keep his own counsel. Only when Edwards asked for the cap and jacket to dress was he told that Ben Smith was to have the race and that he (Edwards) would not be allowed to leave the weighing-room till the numbers went up. Ben Smith had ridden five St. Leger winners, and was discovered in a state of almost tearful depression because he hadn't a ride. This chance ride on Jerry made his sixth and last win in the Doncaster classic, but next year Harry Edwards had a mount on Lord Kelburne's Dare Devil despite what had happened the year before. Later he rode in the same race for the Duke of Leeds and others, but he never won a Leger.

There is always a danger to a jockey's reputation for efficiency, if not for honesty, in taking him off a horse he has previously ridden, unless the circumstances are made public, as was the case with Weston in the 1926 St. Leger, when he

himself suggested a stronger jockey should take his place. Speaking of changing jockeys reminds me that in *Master and Men* Mr. J. B. Booth tells a good story of the late 'Mr. Manton' (the Duchess of Montrose), who frequently changed her jockeys and trainers. Having summarily dismissed George Fordham, that great jockey took an early opportunity to relate the incident to the late Mr. John Corlett, who in the next issue of the *Pink 'Un* summed up the situation in a couple of lines :

'The Duchess of Montrose has requested Fordham to send in his cap and jacket. Fordham did so instantly, for fear the Duchess might change her mind.'

There is an old adage 'Where there is smoke there is fire.' A good many years' experience on the Turf stage and behind the scenes has convinced me that there is a good deal more smoke in the form of 'hot air' than fire with regard to the supposed villainy, malpractice, 'Johnny Armstrong,' 'putting in the cart,' bribery and corruption, and untrustworthiness of jockeys. From the earliest days of professional and free lance jockeys those who have ridden in races seem to have been suspect. A few—really very few in comparison with the evil rumours of the lying and sensation-mongering Jade—well-attested cases in which jockeys have been proved to have been 'bought,' or to have been guilty of professional dishonesty—seems to have given the whole of the dogs bad names and hung a noose perpetually over their heads by irresponsible public opinion. One sometimes wishes that occasionally some of the idle race train and paddock babblers who 'know for certain' that such and such jockeys are 'not trying' and that 'they're all going for something else in the race' might be brought to book, their calumny nailed to the counter, and then soundly punished for groundless accusations. I don't say this would stop the 'hot air' of which I have spoken, but it might keep it within circumscribed circles, which really don't count for anything in Turf values. The unfortunate thing is it is impossible to stop this evil gas from escaping and poisoning many who come in contact with it.

Do you remember the story of the old time jockey 'Speedy Payne,' who got 'fed up' with charges brought against him

and innuendoes levelled at him? At last he became so incensed that on being called before the Jockey Club for alleged misconduct at the post (it was said he had anticipated the flag and jumped off before it fell) he addressed the august assembly thus :

“Your Highnesses. My lords, dukes, generals, colonels and admirals—I doesn’t care a damn ! When I rides and loses they says I pulls ; and when I rides and wins they reports me and suspends me. I’ve got a wife at home and some money in the bank and I doesn’t care a damn *what* you does with me.’

The members of the J.C. assembled were so tickled with ‘Speedy’s’ outburst that he went out from among them without so much as a caution or admonition.

But isn’t it so ? Do not the idle chatterers, disappointed backers, those who love to appear ‘in the know’ and those who rejoice in halfpenny-Press sensationalism, create in their own minds stories of jockeys riding for bookmakers rather than for the owners who employ them, or ‘jockey rings’ which back some horse in a race and all ride so that that particular horse wins ; of jockeys who prefer to be what is termed ‘on the twist’ than to ride straight ? What blind, inexperienced fools such babblers make the officiating stewards to be ! And how little they seem to imagine that jockeys value not merely their reputation but their bread and butter. Those who ride for a fall are invariably speedily accommodated and their licence taken from them—and they know the penalties far better than the evil-tongued libellers, according to whom almost every jockey they see ‘wants warning off’ at some period or other during the course of a season.

Of course there always have been and always will be jockeys ready to lend themselves to corruption and to ‘ride to lose.’ It could not well be otherwise when one realises how cosmopolitan the Turf has become. There must always be black sheep among the heterogeneous body of owners, trainers, and jockeys. But the black ones don’t last long, and the so-called ‘clever brigade’ invariably beat themselves at their own game. ‘Capt. Armstrong’ or ‘Johnny Arm-

strong' conduct is often difficult to bring home satisfactorily and conclusively to those suspected, but the black-birds *do* come home to roost eventually—come home as marked, watched, and waited for.

I have often wondered how the term 'Johnny Armstrong,' as connoting a jockey who 'pulls' or 'stops' the horse he is riding, arose. The definition may, of course, be only an obvious play upon the word 'Armstrong'; on the other hand it may have some connection with the intrepid border chieftain and freebooter who, with his loyal band of followers at Kilnockie, was treacherously lured to meet their king at Caerlanrig Chapel, and were there by him cruelly murdered. All this was in the spring of 1529-30, but Armstrong's name and fame has been kept green in and by the Border ballads. This 'Johnny Armstrong' had a real, brave, fearless corporal existence, which is happily more than can be said of ninety per cent. of those who are supposed to emulate his strength culpably to-day when riding in races.

I remember once travelling from one race to another with a jockey—it was Elijah Wheatley—who had had a ride in every race and couldn't get a winner home. There is a sort of superstition among jockeys that once they have broken the ice such periods of ill-luck come to an end, and he had remarked to me on the station platform, as we were waiting for the train, 'I'd do anything to ride a winner. I don't seem as though I could do anything right, and it's depressing me horribly.'

When we had commenced our journey, you may judge the expression on Wheatley's face when somebody in the carriage said to a companion, 'Wheatley never tried a — yard to-day—he ought to be warned off'—and poor 'Whippet' was suffering the tortures of the damned because, try as he would, he *could not* ride a winner! Soon afterwards he went down to Hartigan and all his old luck returned—he couldn't do wrong. I merely tell the story to show you of how little value public opinion really is, and to illustrate that it is usually only the fire of evil imagination which creates the hot air 'smoke' of Turf scandal.

It is true that some jockeys *do* invite the suspicion of the

regular racing public by their associates. We all know that a man—perhaps particularly a racing man—is judged by the company he keeps, and the fact that some of our jockeys frequently have as their constant companions men known on the Turf as ‘shady,’ not unnaturally results in head-shakes and ‘talk.’ There is an old quatrain which I have more than once heard a Yorkshire trainer recite in the company of jockeys—and there’s much sound common sense in it. It runs :

It will save you no small trouble,  
If when speaking you take care,  
Of whom you speak, to whom you speak,  
And how and when and where.

It wasn’t the late George Drake who gave this advice, but I remember when poor little Mick Carron was apprenticed to him, and later Tommy Weston, neither of them dare be seen speaking to anyone (except those connected with their own Middleham stable) in a paddock. Once when Weston was just commencing to ride in public I thought he had shown signs of judgment and possession of the God-given gift of ‘hands.’ After the race, when he had changed, I saw him in the paddock—it was at Stockton—and asked him to tell me something about himself, his previous connection with horses and so on, so that I might write something about him. I was really interested in him because of his display in the saddle, and because he was a Yorkshire boy. He knew my object and was not then in the limelight. He knew that limelight and a ‘good Press’ means much to a boy, but ——.

‘There’s the old man over there,’ said he, ‘speak to me when we get on to the stand for the next race. The old man won’t let us talk to anyone in the paddock!’

It was another jockey who once replied to one of the annoying tip-hunting brigade, ‘Can you keep a secret?’ ‘I can,’ was the hopeful answer. ‘So can I. Good afternoon.’

Of Sim Templeman, a famous East Yorks jockey who died in March 1884, ‘Vandriver,’ commenting (perhaps not quite fairly) on his demise, imputed indiscreet friendships to him. Said he : ‘It is more in the associations connected with his

name—more in the horses he rode, than in the way he rode them, that our chief interest lies. He was not a great jockey. He rode no better in the prime of his life than he did when, as a boy, he had his first mount at some country meeting. Those old enough to remember his riding the Derby and Oaks winners of 1847 and 1848 tell us it was bad, his finish ungraceful and jerky. The cheers of the crowd as he rode the winner back to the scales were for the horse, not for the rider. Jockey worship had not taken with our forefathers as it has done with their descendants ; but still we fancy Yorkshire throats shouted for Job Marson, Butler, and Tommy Lye, and Newmarket cheered “ Nat ” Robinson. It is not on record, however, that an ovation was ever offered to Sim Templeman. On the contrary, he had to put up with the mortification of not riding in the Leger the horse he had won the Derby with, and there were other instances of his being taken off at the last moment. It is right to add that, as far as we are aware, no case of dishonesty or dishonourable conduct was ever proved against him ; but he had the misfortune to be mixed up with men on whom deep shades of suspicion rested. Messrs. Ridsdale and Gully were his masters, and some of the obloquy cast on them no doubt bespattered the servant. Templeman rode Bloomsbury when he won the Derby on that memorable snowy day forty-five years ago. . . . What we have to observe is that Templeman was on the back of Bloomsbury ; and as every man and woman with sporting tendencies believed emphatically that the horse was a four-year-old, some of the obloquy attached itself to his jockey. It was very probably unjust. The perpetrators of the fraud, if fraud it was, were not likely to take anyone not essentially necessary to the carrying out of the conspiracy, into their confidence, and there was no occasion to make the jockey a *particeps criminis*.’

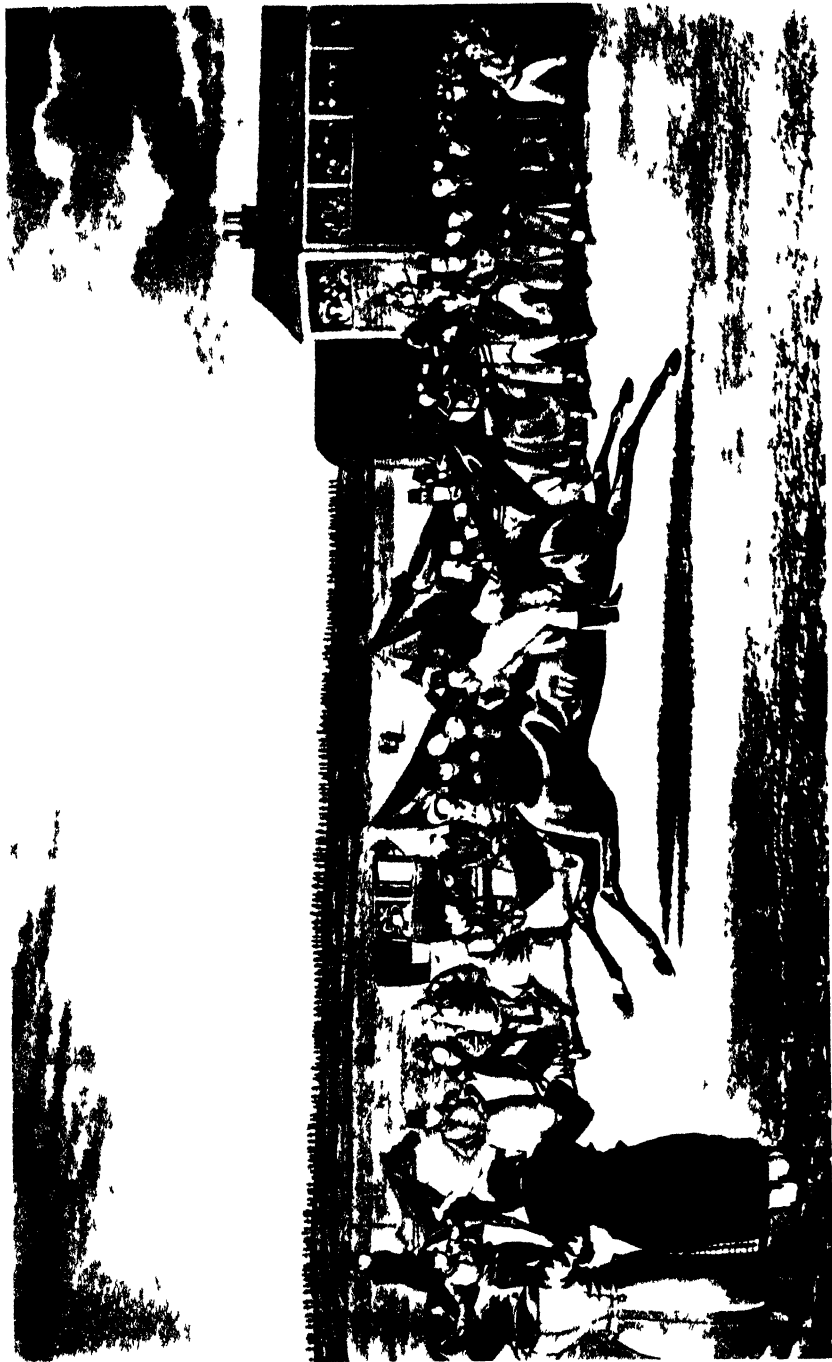
Drink, too, was the curse of many of the old school of jocks. William I’Anson, however, always says Jim Snowden was the finest jockey he ever saw, drunk or sober. The reason assigned for Snowden not having the mount on Doncaster in the Derby of 1873 is that Jim (as was often the case) had lifted his elbow too often on the previous evening and



did not turn up as arranged to give Mr. Merry's horse his 'pipe opener.' Fred Webb was in consequence given the winning ride. On another occasion poor Jim Snowden turned up a week late for Chester Races; and on remarking to the landlord of the hotel at which he always stayed that 'things seem quiet for race time,' was told that he was just seven days too late. 'Then where the —— have I been for seven days?' demanded Jim. He died a very poor man and was buried at Pocklington, near which sporting old Yorkshire town he was born, a few Yorkshire trainers paying his funeral expenses and for a stone to be erected to mark the place where he rests. He ought to have been a very wealthy man, but the bottle and the bookmakers together drained his resources.

Jockeys are notoriously bad tipsters. We have abundant evidence of this in the fortunes lost by ex-jockeys in following the 'selections' of those still riding. Nevertheless there is a deep-rooted opinion held by many that if only jockeys would take them into their confidence 'finding winners' would be the simplest thing in the world. In relentless pursuit of this theory the lives of many jockeys are made a burden by the inconsiderate importunity of unrestrained 'information hunters.' Particularly is this the case in the paddock at race meetings where the feminine sex are the worst offenders. They lay in wait for jockeys on their way from the weighing-room to the parade and mounting enclosure, and if they can discover one who has ever ridden for their great aunt's cousin, or with whom by some other means they have a nodding acquaintance, they button-hole their man and hold him up as did the highwaymen of yore. The position is embarrassing for the jockey. He doesn't like to be rude to a lady, yet he sees the owner and trainer for whom he is to ride, waiting for him to give him his riding orders. Until he receives these orders he probably doesn't know whether his mount is fancied, what is considered 'the danger,' and so on. Thus, in many instances, even if he wanted to put these ladies on to a winner, he is as yet in the dark himself regarding his own horse.

I remember once being amused at Nottingham by seeing a jockey come out of the weighing-room only to be imme-



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diately surrounded by waiting information seekers who attacked him from front, back, and both flanks. 'Can I speak to you for a second?' said the first to reach him. 'Not if it's anything about racing or subscription lists,' he replied in a tone that was definite.

It is told of Sir Mark Wood of Upper Hare Park, near Newmarket, that after a trial for the Two Thousand Guineas, he had the boys who had ridden in the trial gallop into his study and said :

'Do you know the horses you rode this morning?'

'Yes, Sir Mark.'

'Do any of you know the weight you rode?'

'No, Sir Mark.'

'Well,' said Sir Mark producing some "fivers" and a revolver, 'here's a five pound note for each of you. See you hold your tongues, for if this trial gets out I'll blow your brains out with this pistol.'

I remember one North country jockey of more than average ability, who was discharged from a certain stable. He had the offer of another post, and his prospective new master wrote for his character. He received the following reply :

'——— is a good horseman, is willing, can do a horse well if required, and is sober ; but he *writes too many letters.*'

The Wootton boys were always particularly exclusive and seclusive. Their father saw to it that they chose their company very carefully and gave strangers who endeavoured to pump them very little encouragement to make a second advance—they did it so courteously, too ! Once when I was chatting to Frank in the paddock a lady known to both of us—and ladies have no compunction in asking jockeys to divulge what they are paid to keep secret—if a certain horse he was to ride was *certain* to win. 'The horse is fit and well and is trying—now you know as much as I do,' was his reply.

If there is untruth and exaggeration in the minds and mouths of the public as to the questionable conduct of jockeys in connection with their profession, so there is misconception as to the presents they receive, both from owners for whom

they win big stakes and from those who have been lucky enough to win considerable amounts on their horses. Of course there are occasionally big sums given to jockeys—poor ‘Billy’ Watkinson had £1000 invested for him after winning the 1926 National on Jack Horner but was killed a few months afterwards at Bogside. He is one of the exceptions among N.H. jockeys to meet with literal generosity.

Jumping jockeys rarely—very rarely—receive presents of anything like the magnitude of flat race jockeys, after winning races. Somehow this seems out of proportion either to the skill often required and the risk taken. It is, however, a question of *coups*, more of which are brought off on the flat than under N.H. rules.

Mr. Ralph Riddell, of Felton Park, Northumberland, was in his day one of the most prominent northern owners, the famous Dr. Syntax and X.Y.Z. bringing him very much into the limelight. His grandson, Mr. Cuthbert Riddell, of Swinburne Castle, has kindly copied me some of the entries from his forbear’s account books which are of considerable interest as showing the prices paid for bloodstock over a century ago, and the remuneration a crack trainer and jockey received at that time for the services which so contributed to Mr. Ralph Riddell’s success on the Turf. In January, 1809, Mr. Riddell bought from Mr. F. Field two fillies and a colt for £125. In July, 1813, he entered: ‘Knapton for brown colt £131 5s.’ This simple entry records the purchase of the famous Dr. Syntax, for which Mr. Knapton had only a few days before given Mr. Humphrey Osbaldeston 20 guineas. In those days £131 was a big price for an untried youngster, so that we may take it that the Northumbrian Squire, at any rate at the time of purchase, had high hopes regarding the undersized son of Paynator.

Dr. Syntax set up what I think is a Turf record, by winning the same event, *i.e.* the Preston Gold Cup, seven years in succession and running second for it the eighth year. Robert Johnson, a great north country jockey in those days, rode the horse in all his many victories, but was prevented by illness from riding him on the occasion upon which he was beaten. It is recorded that for riding five winners and

three losers for Mr. Riddell in 1815 he was paid the sum of £36, which at that period was quite a generous allowance. Jockeys thenadays had to collect their own fees, and a five pound note was considered a handsome present after riding a winner. In 1819 Mr. Riddell paid jockey Johnson £105 'for riding,' whilst in 1817, when Mr. Riddell had four horses in training at Middleham, Lonsdale, his trainer, received £139 17s. as his fees. In those days Mr. Riddell's horses went to his own place for the winter, but even to-day his training account alone for four horses would be nearer £500.

For winning two important flat races a Duke of Grafton years ago gave John Day, with a dramatic flourish, a £20 note, which was then considered a big present for a jockey. The late Mr. James Merry gave his jockey £1000 when Thormanby won the Derby for him and £50,000 in bets. Sir Joseph Hawley gave Teddington's jockey £2000 when he won. When Blue Gown won the Derby he gave Wells the stakes (over £6000). Mr. Tom Masterman gave Arthur Nightingall a cheque for £1000 when he won the National for him on Ilex.

On the other hand I know of a rich Scotch owner who, after many promises to 'send a present' to a jockey who rode several winners, forwarded him a 'fiver,' and yet another owner whose only recognition of a jockey's success for him was a packet of cigarettes.

Of course we know it is difficult to secure the services of some jockeys unless they are promised a substantial 'present,' or the odds to from anything from a pony to a monkey if they win. To these tops of the profession their riding fees—and they mount up—are of much less account than the 'gratuities,' 'rewards'—call them what you like—they receive from men who 'put it down' and really bet to money when they have something they fancy.

The late Mr. John Day gave it as his opinion that many flat race jockeys were overpaid, and added that this often resulted in their ultimate ruin. He pointed out, too, that the practice made it difficult for 'little men,' who cannot afford to make big presents to fashionable jockeys to secure

their services. One knows some boys who have sprung suddenly into the limelight, to whom, metaphorically, it 'costs a fiver to speak.' The late Fox Russell, in his *Cross Country Reminiscences*, expressed views I have already given as my own as to the lack of proportion in the payment and incomes of jumping jockeys and those on the flat. Says he (speaking of flat race boys) :

'The position and pay of these manikins, with those of the hard-working steeplechase rider, and the schooler of steeplechasers—men who are very often exiles from the flat for no other reason than that of increasing weight—daily risk life and limb on race-course and training ground and get comparatively little for it. If owners, instead of pampering ignorant, and very often bumptious, little boys, turning their heads with cigars and champagne, and giving them the wherewithal to surround themselves with a pack of yellow-haired "ladies," would reward older men whose necks are constantly risked, both in public and in private, in a more substantial fashion, it would be better for all concerned, and I would certainly extend these remarks so as to include a flat race rider who had kept his master's secrets, or had much wasting for any particular race, or ridden in the trial, or, in short, shown himself a faithful servant, *win or lose*.'

The unfortunate fact is that very, very few of the jockeys of the past three decades, who have had anything from £20,000 to £50,000 to their credit in the bank when they gave up riding, have had the sense to keep it. Either backing jockeys' tips—usually the worst in the world—or training horses for owners who never paid their bills, has brought them to a state bordering upon want. How many capable men could one name who have 'gone through the lot.' No one who is 'going racing' regularly needs reminding how many impecunious 'have beens' there are following the meetings and reduced to 'touching.'

Apropos of this, although the organised race-course police has got the gangs of dangerous, dare-devil scoundrels known as 'the boys' better in hand than they have ever been, the activities of these Turf parasites have not been entirely scotched. One very common method of blackmail they used

to adopt was to go along the line of bookmakers with a bogus appeal purporting to be for some distressed person. Although it was obvious blackmail it was easier and safer to give half-a-crown than argue the point. At York, in 1926, one of the race-course plain-clothes men saw some of the 'boys' going round the bookmakers in procession accompanied by a one-time successful light-weight jockey for whose benefit they were supposed to be collecting. On being joined by another detective they went together and cleared the whole lot out of the paddock. 'The treasurer' even then had as many half-crowns as he could hold, and on one of the 'tects asking the down-at-heel and down-and-out ex-jockey how much he would get out of the collection, he said 'Just what they like to give me. If they'd been allowed to go on they'd have got at least a fiver and they'd have perhaps handed me ten bob as my share!'

Speaking of light-weights reminds me that there are certain matters connected with racing history which every now and then crop up with renewed interest. I suppose it will always be the same as newcomers enlist in the ever-changing ranks of the great Turf army. One of these questions—and what bets have been won and lost over it—is the lightest weight at which a jockey ever rode in a race. In later years my valued friend, the late Mr. George Thompson, became one of the best amateur riders England has ever had, and seeing that he rode in a match at York (and won it, too!) when only seven or eight years of age, I suppose he was *ipso facto* a jockey then. At that time his weight was only 2 st. 13 lb. This, as far as my knowledge goes, is the lightest burden a horse has ever carried in a race.

George Fordham won the Cambridgeshire on Little Daniel when he only scaled 3 st. 13 lb. He won the Chester Cup on Captain Douglas Lane's Epaminondas against twenty-five starters, at 4 st. 10 lb., and it was his riding on that occasion that drew from the great bookmaker 'Leviathan' Davies the remark, 'That lad is the best light-weight I have ever seen.'

Frank Buckle is said to have ridden under 4 st. when he commenced his career in the Hon. Richard Vernon's stable,



and the clever Sam Chifney, who could ride at 7 st. 10 lb. till the last days of his life, is also said to have ridden under 4 st. when a lad. Fred Archer, on the other hand, never rode lighter than 5 st. 6 lb., at which figure he won the Cesarewitch of 1872 on Mr. T. Radcliffe's *Salvanos*.

Of course Kitchener, Lord George Bentinck's famous jockey, is always quoted as having ridden the lightest of any jockey, his weight at the outset of his career being 3 st. 7 lb. As has been shown, the late Mr. G. S. Thompson beat this record.

Then there was Johnny Daley, who had his first mount on his father's *Renown* in 1857 when only ten years old. His weight was 3 st. 10 lb. I fancy this list contains the lightest of the light-weights who have made their appearance in silk.

This naturally brings one to a closely allied subject—the wasting of jockeys. In Scotland, in September 1926, Joe Taylor over-egged the pudding in his endeavours to get his weight down to ride *Abbot's Luck*. Strong wasting exercises on an empty stomach told the tale and gave the much-liked Taylor a warning that the human machine can't stand too much. It will be recalled that Mr. 'Bob' Colling stopped his boys riding when they grew to such a size that constant baths, physic and wasting were going to be necessary. It was the same with Felix Leach and others. Colling *père* had had a good deal of experience of wasting in his young days and wouldn't allow his boys to go through the tortures of the damned which he himself had suffered. Like Joe Taylor, Mr. Colling in his youth was physically very strong, and often when staying with our mutual friend, Mr. R. I. Robson, at Farnham, the two 'Bobs' would prepare for future races by walking into York and back.

Too many of our best jockeys have either developed consumption or completely undermined their health by constant privation and by physic rather than natural exercise, and many of them have admitted that when they have got two or three pounds off within a few hours they have been too weak to do justice to their mounts. On a horse which catches hold, or when it comes to a finish when jockeys have to really

sit down and ride, then many of us think that those of them who have been wasting hard would have been more likely to win if they had ridden a couple of pounds overweight rather than be as weak as a kitten. But some owners are so afraid of declaring over-weight—they think it spoils their present chances and influences the handicapper against them in the future—that they will have the last ounce sweated out of their jockey. Of course I am speaking generally and casting no aspersions upon the owner of Abbot's Luck.

Fred Archer couldn't waste naturally by walking because it made him so ravenously hungry, so he had his own physic dope, and lived on a couple of dry crusts a day. George McCall, when in the heyday of his success, was a long (and fast) distance walker to keep his weight down. It was the same with the still living Jim Fagan (who still walks ten miles a day around Malton). On one occasion when Fagan had been wasting hard to ride in a couple of races at York, he won the first and then broke his fast for the day by eating a small pear. Within an hour this had increased his bodily weight by a pound. He and other jockeys have found that when they have got down to their lightest possible weight, any food taken increases their weight in the ratio of three or four to one. Thus to eat an ounce means to put on a quarter of a pound.

Colonel R. F. Meysey-Thompson, who died 1st September, 1926, found this out. He rode in a race at 10 st., and in the race following had 10 st. 7 lb. to carry, so felt he could take a mouthful. He was astounded on going to scale to find that within a few minutes he had put on four pounds. It was the same with George Johnson, who after his riding days was for long head man to Fred Bates at Middleham. He was engaged to ride Bersagliere in the Ascot Stakes, and though he wasted hard told Mr. Batt, the owner, he would have to declare 2 lb. overweight. 'Then I'll get someone else,' retorted Batt. 'If that's so,' said Johnson, 'I'll go and have a sandwich.' He did so; the owner couldn't find another jock to do the weight, took Johnson back to the scale, and found the sandwich had made other 4 lb. difference and that he was now 6 lb. too much. So Cheeseman, who had to declare 2 lb., was put up and was just beaten.

In his book, *A Trainer to Two Kings*, Mr. Richard Marsh gives a striking instance of this. He says : 'The winter before I won on Temple I walked 10 st. 6 lbs. and I rode Temple at 8 st. 7 lbs. Of course I had to waste awfully hard, and it really was a most depressing business. The day before Temple's race I had got down to the weight and then had a glass of sherry and the lean part of a small chop. When I came to weigh two or three hours afterwards I found I was 3 lbs. heavier. It meant more rigorous wasting, but the next day I did the weight all right.'

There is still a firm-rooted idea in the minds of 'the man in the street' that trainers periodically bury their apprentices for hours together up to the neck in a dung-heap to keep their weight down. It may have been done somewhere in the so-called merry past, and would doubtless act as a Turkish bath, but I've never been able to trace where the practice, or story, originated, or to hear of anyone who ever employed it. 'Nothing but a silly tale,' was John Osborne's reply to me when I asked him if he'd ever heard of boys being sweated in this way.

Melton Vasey quite recently told me that half the apprentices who went to him got such appetites with riding out in a morning as to become too heavy ever to make jockeys. 'What can one do?' he asked. 'We can't hunger the little beggars.'

I remember on one occasion getting over four pounds off within twenty-four hours in response to a request to ride as an amateur what looked a certain winner in a 'maiden.' I went into a Turkish bath with some professional jockeys for two or three hours, took some patent physic, went without breakfast, and though in good hard training before all this, managed to get down to the required weight. When I saw my 'owner' in the paddock you may imagine my disgust at being told : 'I've decided to forgo the allowance and put a professional up.' Fortunately I was speechless, and it was only human that I should feel no pang of regret to see what was to have been my mount and 'a good thing' beaten a short head ! I never felt so fit in all my life as after that wasting experience. Of course I wasn't at it week by

week, like some professionals who are often more exhausted than their mounts when they've overdone it.

Even if the bottom weights were all increased I don't think it would eliminate the severe wasting, deprivation, and restraint which some jockeys have to practise, for they would still try to get down to the lower weights when called upon to do so. In some cases the seeds of consumption are set by all the hardships they undergo, in others it seems to have no deleterious physical or corporal effect whatever, as witness the just-mentioned Mr. Melton Vasey to-day, Mr. R. Colling, Mr. 'Ruby' Thomson—to mention only a few. They've blossomed out into aldermanic proportions.

Winter is the time of flat race jockeys' 'indiscretions,' if not of discontent, unless they hie them to foreign parts to ride or keep themselves fit and free from fat (as many of them do) by riding to hounds. Hunting has always been a favourite sport of both flat and 'cross-country' riders, more so perhaps in the days before the annual emigration to India and elsewhere. Incidentally most flat race jockeys endeavour to ride to hounds with their knees up, simply because they've never learned to ride otherwise—I nearly wrote 'properly.' If a horse pecks or makes a mistake down they come. They are not alone in this, by the way ; for we learn that Buckle, who was the Archer and Donoghue of his day, used frequently to stay with Mr. Delmé Radcliffe (who managed the Prince of Wales' racing establishment) to hunt with the Hertfordshire Hounds. We are told he used to tumble off at every fence. Joe Thwaites, who whipped in to Capt. Renwick's hounds when he was living at Malton—and loved it—was an exception to the rule. How he hated leaving the Yorkshire hunting when he went south ! So did Fred Archer, whose old hunter Double Chance won the 1925 Grand National for him.

Some of the old-time jockeys hunted too, but it is interesting to read in *The Sporting Magazine* for Dec. 1819 that the leading jockeys had by then arrived at such stables as sheltered St. Leger candidates, to try them for the Yorkshire classic. Those were days when there was a great deal of *ante post* betting ; days, too, when many private individuals

had their own tout to inform them of the work done by fancied horses and of anything concerning such horses likely to alter the betting market. There were no telegrams, telephones, or daily training reports in the sporting papers in those times, but there *were* 'nobbler,' horses *were* got at ; and there were other matters a knowledge of which was important to those who bet in thousands, and who wanted to hedge their money or lay against a horse.

Although it was not till 1762 that the members of the Jockey Club decided upon the forerunner of what is the present system of registration of colours, there had been for some time distinctive liveries recognised as belonging to certain individuals. In *Raciana or Riders' Colours* Mr. J. B. Muir says : ' The early history of riders' colours is very obscure. No doubt some distinguishing mark, or badge, or cap was used even in the earliest days of horse racing. As a matter of fact in earlier times all jockeys seem to have worn black caps, pretty much as described in the following, which purports to be a description of the dress worn by the jockeys in the earliest Derby :

' A black velvet cap with a long French peak, and a bow of black satin riband behind ; long hair falling to his shoulders ; a white cambric neckcloth of ample folds, tied at the back ; a long body-coat with flaps, wide skirt, three buttons at the side, where it opened, as well as in the front, and behind ; knee breeches, strapped below the knee ; white cotton stockings and black leather Oxford shoes, with long tongues and silver buckles.'

Now the first Derby was run in 1780, and twenty-seven years before that we find the Earl of Bath recording the use by jockeys of variously coloured silk jackets as follows :

' To observe the skill and address of the riders, who were all distinguished by different colours of white, blue, green, red or yellow, sometimes spurring and whipping, sometimes checking and pulling, to give fresh breath and courage ! and it is often observed that the race is won as much by the dexterity of the rider as by the vigour of the animal.'

Before 1780, too, the Jockey Club resolution referred to had been passed. Dated 4th October, 1762, it runs :

' For the greater convenience of distinguishing the horses in running and also for the prevention of disputes arising from not

knowing the colours of each rider, the undermentioned gentlemen have come to the resolution and agreement of having the colours annexed to the following names worn by their respective riders. The Stewards therefore hope, in the name of the Jockey Club, that the above-named gentlemen will take care that the riders be provided with dresses accordingly.'

As will be seen in the chapter on Clerks of Courses the request of the Jockey Club was *not* generally recognised.

In connection with the recent innovation of steeplechase jockeys riding with protective helmets, it is interesting to recall that on one occasion at the Doncaster St. Leger meeting, jockeys rode in the old three-cornered cocked-hats. This was in 1821, the race being described on 'the card' as 'The Cocked-Hat Stakes of 25 guineas each.' The winner was Sir W. Maxwell's Monreith, ridden by T. Sheppard, the hero of three St. Legers. There was also a 'Cocked-Hat' Stakes at Goodwood, jockeys so attired being allowed 7 lbs.

The earliest reference to any racing livery of which I have any record is dated 1530 and appears in the Privy Purse expenses of Henry VIII, in which it is shown that the following payments were made for the riding livery of the royal jockeys :

'Item the Vij day in February, paid to John Scott for iij doublets of Burgis satin and for iij doublets of fustian with the making and lining for the iij boys that runs the geldings. . . . xxxvijs. Item the xxj day paid to John Scott for making coats and doublets for the running boys of the stable . . . xixs. Item paid to X'p for the mylanner for ij riding caps of black satin and lined with black velvet for the King's grace. xxs.'

As an instance and illustration of the difficulties of following races, not to mention judging a close finish (granted they were not of frequent occurrence at this period), let me quote the opening race (the King's Plate) on the card at Ipswich on 6th June, 1727 :

'Lord Thomond's ches.m. Yallow Girl, rid in white.  
Duke of Somerset's b.m. Brown Betty, rid in yallow.  
Mr. Pelham's br.h. Foxhunter, rid in white.  
Lord Tankerfield's br.c. rid in yallow.  
Mr. Henry's br.h. Woodcock, rid in red.  
Mr. William's ch.h. Rake, rid in red.  
Mr. Kendall's dark ch. Fox, rid in red.'

It was Lord George Bentinck who, in 1844, amongst other Turf reforms, brought discipline to bear upon the dress of jockeys. He insisted that they should wear a silk, velvet, or satin jacket, top boots and breeches. Old John Kent, his lordship's trainer and biographer, tells us that 'it was by no means unusual to see jockeys riding in trousers and gaiters with jackets and caps of the roughest and most grotesque description.' Even yet at some little country meetings one sees what are obviously home-made colours worn, whilst not infrequently farmers' sons turn out to ride in 'chases in butcher boots and brown cloth breeches. We are told by Mr. J. B. Booth that even the late Mr. John Corlett bought the white silk and gold braid for his first set of colours (he changed them later in the hope that a new livery would bring him long deferred luck) and took the material to a dressmaker. A story is told of a northern trainer who employed a local woman to make some silk breeches for his light-weights. There were shrieks of laughter in the weighing-room at York when it was found that the good lady had dispensed with buttons in a certain part of the tiny nether garments. . . .

My old friend Mr. 'Bob' Robson, who used to ride so well and later trained so many winners, had to have his first set of primrose and blue colours made surreptitiously by his father's housekeeper. He had entered a horse at York—they had steeplechases at Knavesmire in those days—and had to steal away unknown to his father, who hated racing. When he found that 'Bob' *would* be a 'gentleman jock' and train jumpers, he gave him this excellent bit of advice: 'Bob, I'd rather you'd stuck to hunting, but if you *will* mix yourself up with racing my advice is, to get the best horses you can into the worst company you can, and keep the best company possible yourself.'

We have heard a good deal recently regarding dangerous riding. The older school of trainers attribute it not to dash, courage, or anxiety to win on the part of most jockeys, but rather to inability to control their horses when perched up like monkeys. One north country trainer went so far as to say to me in 1927 that good horsemanship, in the true

sense of the term, is impossible unless the rider can also use his legs.

‘ Crossing and jostling ’ was for long allowed on the English turf and advertised in the conditions of races, whilst fights on horseback between jockeys were not unknown. Indeed it was a recognised part of a jockey’s finesse. John Lawrence tells us ‘ jockeys were accustomed to fight on horseback, striking each other and their respective horses with their whips and aiming to cut out their antagonist’s eyes.’ Perhaps the most historic instance was on 28th July, 1714, between an ancestor of the Peck family (Robert Hessletine) and Stephen Jefferson at York. Hessletine closed in Jefferson’s mount so that the latter was obliged to whip over his horses’ shoulder. A contemporary chronicler says :

‘ But as both the riders had shown foul play and afterwards fought on horseback, many disputes arose amongst the sportsmen, and it was agreed the heat should be run over again.’

Then followed a fight in the law courts as to the ownership of the Royal Gold Cup for which the race had been run. The judge decided in court that four owners had an equal right to it. The Earl of Carlisle and Sir William Lowther therefore purchased the four shares in the cup, which was run for in July the following year, the Earl of Carlisle’s chestnut gelding Buckhunter (later called the Carlisle Gelding), winning the trophy and the Royal Gold Cup for that year at York, in August with the same horse.

There are one or two well-authenticated instances of famous jockeys fighting on horseback like knights of old even after 1775, when crossing and jostling was only allowed in those races in which the condition was specified in the agreement previously drawn up. It was in that very year that the famous Capt. O’Kelly, who owned the immortal Eclipse, declined to take a half share in a particular horse match because (to quote his own words) :

‘ If the match had been made cross and jostle as I proposed, I would not only have stood all the money, but would have brought a spalpeen from Newmarket, no higher than a twopenny loaf, that should have driven his lordship’s horse into the furzes, and have kept him there for three weeks.’



John Pond, one of the earliest *Racing Calendar* compilers, in 1753 included in the General Rules of Racing that 'crossing and jostling are permissible in all races unless the contrary be stated.' In these days, the average racing crowd, at any rate in Tattersall's, has become so critical that if they see that the winning horse has so much as 'leaned towards' another (as some horses do) fully anticipate an objection and sometimes even commence betting on it before there is any time for such objection to be laid.

There was an objection early in the 1927 season (it was over-ruled) on the score that the jockey on the winner had interfered with the chances of the second horse by hitting it over the mouth with his whip. As already stated, it used to be clearly set out in the conditions of racing 'crossing and jostling allowed.'

Apropos of all this it is not generally known that the famous painter George Morland (1763-1804) was in his early days something of a jockey and had one or two hectic experiences. I have before me a letter he wrote to his friend, Philip Dawe (father of George Dawe, R.A.) in 1785. Here is an extract which gives us an idea of Turf conditions and jockeys' manners in those days :

'You must know' (he says) 'I have commenced a new business as jockey to the races. I was sent for to Mount Pleasant (Minster, near Margate), by the gentlemen of the Turf to ride a racer for the Silver Cup, as I am thought to be the best horseman here. I went there and was weighed and afterwards dressed in the tight striped jacket and jockey's cap, and lifted on the horse, led to the start, and placed in the rank and file. Three parts of the people out of fun laid bets that I should win the cup. Then the drums beat and we started. 'Twas a four mile heat, and the first three miles I could not keep the horse behind them being so spirited an animal : by that means he soon exhausted himself, and I soon had the mortification of seeing them come galloping past me hissing and laughing whilst I was spurring his guts out. A mob of horsemen then galloped round, telling me I could not ride, which is always the way if you lose the heat. They began at last to use their whips, and finding I could not get away I

directly pulled off my jacket, laid hold of the bridle, and offered battle to the man who started first, though he was big enough to eat me. Several gentlemen then rode in and all the mob turned over to me and I was led away in triumph with shouts. But, however, I did not fare half so well at Margate races, and was very near being killed. I rode for a gentleman and won the heat so completely that when I came to the winning post the other horses were near half a mile behind, upon which near four hundred sailors, smugglers, fishermen, etc., set upon me with sticks, stones, waggoners' whips, fists, etc., and one man, an innkeeper here, took me by the thigh and pulled me off the horse. I could not defend myself. The sounds I heard all were, Kill him ! strip him ! throw him into the sea ! cut off his large tail ! and a hundred other sentences rather worse than the first ! I got from them once and got into a booth ; some men threw me out amongst the mob again and I was worse off than ever. Michiner rode in to me, dismounted, and took me up in his arms half beat to pieces, kept crying to the mob to keep back and that his name was Michiner, and he would notice them. At last a party of light horsemen and several gentlemen and their servants, some post-boys, hairdressers, bakers, and several other people I knew, armed themselves with sticks, etc., and ran in to my assistance and brought me a horse, though the mob pressed so hard it was long before I could mount.'

The old school of jockeys—many of us can remember the last of them—who were not particular about riding a newcomer or an amateur over the wing of a hurdle, or deliberately riding down those whom they feared most in the race—has gone. Occasionally in connection with the winter jumping game one hears of wild, careless, and even dangerous jockeys, but they are pretty closely watched in these days. Some of us can recall men, who got a lot of riding and who often deliberately rode for a fall, trusting to their own experience both of falling and of getting up and away again, to give them the best of the encounter.

Once at Louth in Lincolnshire one or two crack jockeys came down to ride in 'the big race.' A raw country lad walked into the weighing-room chewing a quid of tobacco

and carrying a parcel of home-made racing colours and big hunting boots. Asked what he was riding he gave the name of a horse of which they had never heard, and admitted that he had never ridden in a steeplechase, or any other race for that matter, in his life. Going down to the post the crack jockeys arranged that it would be safer for all concerned to slip the farmer's boy over the wing of the first fence ; for they felt sure he would fall in front of them or jump on top of them. However, when the flag fell the long-legged baccy-chewer got about fifteen lengths start and no one else could catch him, or see which way he had gone. He won by a distance, and it transpired his mount had been bought out of a selling 'chase the year before, turned out to grass and then hunted a bit, re-named, and entered for the home meeting.

It was at Manchester that William I'Anson once found he could not get a jockey to ride one of his horses in a hurdle race, so told old William Harding, so long his head man, that he would have to ride. Now Harding had never ridden over hurdles in public and was over fifty, but he made no demur, slipped into the weighing-room, borrowed some breeches and boots, and won his race easily. There was a similar incident at York some years ago when Jim Wheatley, of Beverley (once a famous runner and now a great pigeon fancier) took a mount and won when as old as Harding.

It used to be told that at Northallerton races, which course went through a farm-yard, that in a mile and a half race (twice round) a jockey hid one misty day behind a stack and waited for the horses coming round the last time, then jumped in with them and won, no one ever knowing where he had suddenly appeared from.

Rightly or wrongly I believe that the late ' Bob ' Adams—one of the finest cross-country jockeys I ever saw and alongside of whom I rode many gallops—was disqualified for a similar thing—hiding behind a friendly haystack on the far side of the course at Sedgefield and missing a time round, thus winning with a comparatively fresh horse.

Once at Hull races Bob accepted a very unlikely looking mount which finished nowhere. The owner, however, seemed quite pleased and said ' Well, there's one thing : he

can *stay*, can't he.' 'Yes,' agreed my old friend, 'but he stays *too long in one place*.'

In these days of express trains, and when jockeys ride in France one day and travel by aeroplane to ride in England the next, little is thought of one of the fraternity being at a meeting in Scotland one day and having mounts in the south of England on that succeeding it. It was different, however, in 1838, when the stage coach, or relays of hacks, were the only means of progress in many parts. Thus it was considered (and really *was*) something of an achievement for Tommy Lye of Middleham to ride two winners on the Wednesday at the Caledonian meeting at Musselburgh and reach Northallerton to ride—and win!—on the following day at that long since defunct Yorkshire fixture. The distance is 170 miles, and the *Sporting Magazine*, referring to the feat, under the heading of 'Sharp Practice,' said 'John Holmes, whose riding as well as his appearance is of the first character, rode Appleton Lad at the same Northallerton meeting for the Produce Stakes and won it. He left Northallerton at six o'clock that evening and on Monday following rode in and won the Kirwans (the Irish Oatlands), with Mr. Ferguson's celebrated Harkaway.'

From time to time one hears arguments to the effect that apprentice jockeys are neither taught their profession at the stables to which they are attached, or given sufficient opportunities in public to apply or perfect the science of race riding. It is undoubtedly a fact that many trainers are so much away on race-courses that they have little time to supervise the training of the boys articted to them. Indeed, one might be excused for wondering how some of them are able to watch the progress of the horses under their charge except so far as occasional home and public trials supply this information. As to trainers not giving their own apprentices opportunities on a race-course, this is very often the outcome of the demand on the part of their patrons for 'fashionable jockeys.' It is quite possible that many trainers, compelled by those who have horses in their stables to engage boys whose names are much in the limelight, have equally good or even better apprentices of their own, if only the same

opportunities of gaining experience and encouragement came their way. As to inculcating the art of horsemanship—the God-given gift of hands, the correct seat, and so forth—a number of trainers are apt to assume that either it is there, or cannot be acquired. They adopt the theory that the main essentials to horsemanship are born and will show themselves in due course, or if not obviously inherent cannot be taught. Others, Mr. S. Wootton for instance, either personally or through some experienced member of their staff, give all their apprentices a similar chance of learning.

I travelled recently with A. Langham, a north country ex-jockey, and, incidentally, mentioned a one-time successful horseman, to wit the late Jim Griffiths, once so well known as a clever jockey, and who won a couple of Chester Cups and a Doncaster Cup, amongst many other races. Langham remarked: 'I was at college with him.' Now as James Griffiths died in the October of 1915 at the age of 63, I looked incredulous, and Langham proceeded to explain that when he was apprenticed with Mr. R. Armstrong at Penrith, he and the other boys went night by night to what they called 'college,' with Griffiths as professor. Jim spent the last seventeen years of his life with Armstrong, and part of his duty was to teach the boys employed at the Penrith stables some of the art of which he was such a past-master. A saddle was placed on a form, or on the wooden horse which was used in the saddle-room for cleaning 'tack,' and seated on this, with reins in their hands, old Jim taught them how to take a 'steadier,' how to control a 'puller,' how to ride round turns, how to take a fresh hold of a horse, and generally how to use both their hands and their heads. He took endless pains with them and made 'college' at Penrith really interesting. One cannot but feel if all apprentices had the same opportunities as those who were under the tutorship of Griffiths, and also chances to apply the imparted knowledge on race-courses, we should not hear so much of the oft-recurring discussion as to whether the jockeys of this generation are equal to those of the past, and if not, why? James Griffiths, by the way, is laid to rest in Penrith churchyard, and is by no means forgotten by many who still go racing.

In March 1927 'Faraway' wrote in *Horse and Hound* regarding the conditions obtaining in France, as follows :

'First and second prizes of cups are given at the end of each season to the trainers whose apprentices have won most races on the flat, and there is keen competition among the Chantilly and Maisons-Laffitte trainers for these prizes. Last year Bariller, a trainer of French birth at Maisons-Laffitte, won the first cup. A further inducement is a race for apprentices, run at the end of the flat racing season at Le Tremblay, and known as the Grand Prix des Apprentis, which is substantially doted with the sum of 25,000 francs, and is confined to budding knights of the pigskin. Further, the Committee of the Société d'Encouragement have passed a rule that all apprentices, when riding for their own masters (*i.e.* trainers to whom they are articulated), shall be entitled to an allowance of 8 lb. instead of 5 lb., which is the usual allowance for apprentices in races not exceeding a value of 20,000 francs. These allowances cease when an apprentice has ridden thirty-one winners.'

It is obvious that the Stewards of the National Hunt intend to be more careful in granting permits to gentlemen to ride in other than races for amateurs. I know that in 1926 a number of well-known youthful gentlemen jocks were put through a rigorous examination as to their social and financial standing—particularly the latter—to see if it was really possible for them to travel about from meeting to meeting, and to ride purely for the fun of 'going round' without receiving any fee or reward. For nearly a century there has been trouble, heart-burning, disappointments, objections, and disputes over this self-same subject—who is entitled to describe himself as 'a gentleman' for Turf purposes. At Stokesley races so long ago as 1803 a Mr. Christopher Rowntree rode his own horse a winner for a cup ; but this was withheld owing to an objection that he 'was not a gentleman.' However, Christopher took the matter to York Assizes and proved that he *was* a gentleman. The defendants said he dined with farmers on market day and only paid two shillings for his meal, and that he wore leather breeches. His counsel argued that to prove his client wasn't a gentleman it would have to be shown that Rowntree dined and *didn't* pay, and not that he went about in leather breeches

but that he went without any breeches at all. It was proved that he kept a small pack of hounds and had a little property of his own in Cleveland, and he established his right to call himself a gentleman and to ride as such. In 1836 there was another objection to a certain rider in a North Yorkshire race, and an eye-witness chronicled the incident thus, incidentally giving a curious idea as to what constituted 'a gentleman' :

'The aspirant for equestrian fame, having by some lucky freak of Dame Fortune exchanged his corduroys and hob-nails for boots and buckskins, on being objected to, exclaimed with much emphasis : "I subscribes to a pack o' dogs ! I hunts three days a week !! I drinks wine to my dinner !!! and I keeps a mistress ! ! ! !"' He then bumped the scale with a look which said as plain as look could speak—that's a settler !'

In 1859 when they were promoting a steeplechase meeting in Cumberland, there was a long discussion as to what constituted a gentleman rider. This debate was made the subject of a witty poem, which opened :

There was one regulation most firmly ordained,  
That gentlemen only should ride ;  
But who was a gentleman ? that was the point,  
And a difficult one to decide.

Very soon the attempt to decide it gave rise  
To no little dispute and commotion ;  
For how a real gentleman should be defined  
Each man had a different notion.

A quarter of a century before this an amateur jockey suggested : 'That a gentleman rider shall be a member of a Racing or Foxhunting Club into which admission is only gained by ballot ; and that, if not convenient to have such riders in a heavy-weight stake, it shall be specifically stated "to be ridden by any person but a jockey."' You may then put your groom on your horse, and thus avoid the present unpleasant alternative of bumping the pig-skin in company with which you would not be seen at a bull-bait. . . . The annoying disputes at the scale would then cease.'

George Duller rode at Birmingham in February 1927 with one foot in a slipper, not having quite recovered from an

accident. He came in for a certain amount of hero-worship when he got up on Royal Falcon, and more so when he won. One would not rob him of one particle of credit due to pluck, though the Press reports as to his 'courage to ride under the circumstances,' must have amused him a little. When we recall how, years ago, a jockey won a race at York during which he broke a leg, and how Lt.-Col. G. Foljambe rode a couple of winners in 1925 entirely minus a foot and with a socket to take the place of a stirrup, Duller's Birmingham bravery pales a little. Moreover, isn't there the case of Mr. Greville Nugent (he rode as 'Mr. St. James'), fracturing his leg against a post when riding Melita at Esher, but continuing the race just to be beaten into second place? Poor fellow, he was killed later by Longford coming down in a steeplechase and striking him on the head with a forefoot. Didn't F. Croney go on riding a year ago at Wetherby with a broken toe—and riding well too? And haven't we known jockeys mount with a broken rib after a fall and carry on gamely?

Not a few huntsmen go on the whole day with a cracked rib, and hasn't Mr. John Brown of Kirbymoorside (who used to ride well under N.H. Rules) won the Sinnington Hunt Point-to-Point Race since he lost a leg? It was unfortunate that Lt.-Col. Foljambe had an awful cropper at Wetherby when riding Lady Biddy in 1925. This I think has finally put an end to his race riding.

Ben Smith, the hero of five St. Legers, when riding Lord Archibald Hamilton's grey colt Ironsides, at the York Spring Meeting of 1786, was kicked on the leg by Mr. Garforth's Brillante (another grey), just as the 'off' went. Smith continued in the four-mile race and won it. Naturally he had to be carried to the scale and in a fainting condition. When he had weighed out he was taken to Middlethorpe and was unable to ride again that year. Smith was the victim of several other accidents, including one at Chester, where an excited man (who had been married only that morning and had been celebrating the event), ran into the course, was knocked down by Smith's horse and fatally injured. Benjamin Smith and his mount also came down, the jockey being seriously hurt.



Apropos of men riding well despite the loss of limb, Mr. Harry Worcester Smith in *A Sporting Tour* says of a Westmeath follower :

‘ One of the bravest followers I have ever seen in the hunting field—a soldierly-looking man, well-groomed, with grey moustache drooped and pointed to a nicety. I noticed that every time he jumped a bank he took hold of the saddle on the right hand side and sometimes behind. The right leg, encased in white leather, the four buttons showing over the top, with well-blackened boot and burnished spur, was bent just enough at the knee to seem perfectly natural. Not understanding his difficulty, I enquired from a neighbour, who said, “ That is Sir Hutchinson Poe, a colonel in the army, who lost his right leg at the hip in the Soudan ; that right leg, you see, is a wooden one, and he has to hold on at every jump ; but let me tell you,” he added, “ once in a while he comes down, and then the right leg goes galloping off, and he has to sit down or balance on the other till some one brings the horse and leg back.” ’

To conclude this chapter I will give the original recipe for ‘ making ’ a jockey. It was written about a hundred years ago and ran :

Take a pestle and mortar of moderate size,  
 Into Queensbury’s head put Bunbury’s eyes ;  
 Cut Dick Vernon’s throat, and save all the blood,  
 To answer your purpose there’s none half so good ;  
 Pound Clermont to dust, you’ll find it expedient,  
 The world cannot furnish a better ingredient.  
 From Derby and Bedford take plenty of spirit,  
 Successful or not they have always the merit—  
 Tommy Panton’s address, John Wastell’s advice,  
 And touch of Prometheus, ’tis done in a trice.

There was a paraphrase of these lines in 1886, which brought them up to date. They were by ‘ Borderer ’ and were as follows :

Take a pestle and mortar of moderate size,  
 Into Coventry’s head put Lord Marcus’s eyes ;  
 Cut Tom Cannon’s throat, and save all the blood,  
 To answer your purpose there’s none half so good ;

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Pound Archer to dust—you'll find it expedient—  
The world cannot furnish a better ingredient.  
From Barrett and Wood take plenty of spirit—  
Successful or not, they have always the merit.  
Jim Goater's address, John Osborne's advice,  
And touch of Prometheus : 'tis done in a trice.

## CHAPTER V

### THE LOCAL STEWARDS

Let observation, with extended view,  
Remark each anxious toil, each eager strife,  
And watch the busy scenes of crowded life.

DR. JOHNSON, *Vanity of Human Wishes*.

THE essential component parts of an ideal Steward are as follows :

(1) Intimate knowledge of the thoroughbred horse so far as condition, pace, and temperament go collectively and, so far as possible, individually.

(2) A thorough and sympathetic knowledge of the rules of the Turf and of racing in all its phases.

(3) Experience born of intelligent observation of the idiosyncrasies and peculiarities of various jockeys.

(4) Ability to ' read ' a race accurately as it is in progress and to miss none of the incidents and accidents which have an influence on the result as well as on the position of all the horses competing.

(5) A knowledge of human nature, a quick eye, a judicial mind, and what is termed at Sandhurst, the power to ' appreciate the situation ' rapidly.

(6) Regular attendance at race meetings to keep *au fait* with the varying conditions of horses which ' come on ' and ' go off,' show different form when more leniently handicapped, or in races over longer or shorter distances.

Included in these six essentials will be found either directly mentioned or connoted ' the whole duty of man ' so far as it applies to Stewards at race meetings. The position is one for which neither title, wealth, nor position fits a man, though it does not debar him. The main *desiderata* are

knowledge and experience. For long it has been urged that if we had stipendiary Stewards licensed and appointed as are other judges and other officials there would be much less chicanery and malpractice. There always *have* been and always *will* be those who do not play the game, and who stoop to impropriety and villainy. Where the carcase is, there will the vultures gather. There always *will* be vultures, and they'll always imagine they can be more astute than those who have gone before and have been exposed. Stipendiary Stewards couldn't discover them, before they had hovered over the carcase, or descended upon it, any more than can the honorary Stewards of to-day, or if either *did* have their suspicions aroused, they could not act without concrete evidence to go upon.

Now Stewards to-day are in the main—at any rate those who really count and are effective—drawn from the ranks of those who know racing backwards. They may have with them some who, if acting alone, might not inspire the greatest confidence—beginners who are in a good school! A very great number of those who occupy the position of Steward have ridden in races themselves, have for years been close observers of racing, own, or have owned racehorses, so know they are not machines. They are usually bred to the game, and know most of what there is to know regarding Turf mysteries and Turf machinations. If stipendiary Stewards were appointed to-morrow they would have to be drawn from the very class which acts to-day in an honorary capacity, hence we should be 'as you were,' except that the amateur would become a professional.

It might be that as such he would consider that he must justify the payment of the salary he drew, that he must sink most of the social amenities of racing and train himself to become more of a private detective, gathering scraps of evidence from Tattersall's, from paddock gossip, whispered conversations, and so on. He might, too, be compelled by his office to attend more meetings and so miss no chapter or page in the Turf story, which after all is linked up from meeting to meeting and must be followed word by word and line by line to be thoroughly understood. 'The book' only

gives a cold, bloodless, unilluminating, sometimes even deceptive, synopsis of the past. To understand the story we must be able to fill in the detail, as the handicapper has so often to do. A Steward acting only at isolated meetings and not attending many more is quite unable to do this and often has (or has not) his suspicions aroused, when the case would be *au contraire* had he 'seen what happened at——.' Probably we shall live to see stipendiary Stewards, and it may be, for the reasons stated, that they might become more efficient. But they'll be appointed from the ranks of the Stewards already officiating, and they'll not be able to exterminate the vultures or to convince rogues that they will be certain to be detected.

I have sometimes felt sure in my own mind that I have 'seen something' which has missed the eyes of the Stewards acting at the meeting. The fact that there has been no enquiry has been remarked upon by others, who have also imagined *they* 'saw something.' Often when Stewards have been charged with blunders and ineptitude, they have seen as much as anyone else; what they have seen has been duly noted, but it has been decided to give the suspects a little more rope so that they will be quite certain to provide evidence to hang themselves. Stewards, like jockeys, occasionally ride a waiting race, but they have long memories and want to have incontrovertible facts before they take direct action. This perhaps does not satisfy public demands at the moment, but as the Stewards are primarily the custodians of the morals of racing, and secondarily (and in a way, only indirectly) concerned with the general public, their views, investments, and often uncalled-for indignation and suspicion, the Stewards are justified in adopting such line of conduct as appears to them best.

The *Sporting Magazine* writer of 1839, whose opinions on the duties of various Turf officials I have already quoted, is perhaps not quite correct when he said of the position of Steward (the italics are mine) :

'It is a post of honour which cannot fail to afford considerable gratification. Viewed as one of very great responsibility the nomination carries with it a very high com-



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pliment, and the pleasure is enhanced by the reflection that they are presiding over the amusements of thousands. . . . It frequently occurs that gentlemen of property and influence, on account of their known integrity and zeal for the welfare of their neighbours and the property of the county in which they reside, are called upon to accept the undertaking, *although racing has not hitherto formed a part of their amusements. They are consequently but little versed in the laws ;* and to such persons, feeling as they must, an anxious desire to acquaint themselves with credit to their own abilities and justice to all parties, the undertaking becomes the more responsible. . . . *But to become master of the leading circumstances which are required of a Steward does not demand much study,* and therefore becomes the more unpardonable if neglected.'

In *The Turf*, published three-quarters of a century later, Mr. A. E. T. Watson said that Stewards often perform their duties in a very perfunctory manner, or not seldom entirely neglect—'occasionally from ignorance ; for Clerks of Courses are apt to invite distinguished persons to act as Stewards because they are locally popular or important, and notwithstanding the fact that they know nothing of the sport they are requested to control. . . . If Stewards of meetings did with more strictness what they are appointed to do, there would be much less scandal and suspicion than are at present found on the Turf. One does not want a Steward to be fussy and unnecessarily prone to investigate ; but there are occasions when horses or riders perform oddly, when perhaps the betting has foreshadowed something suspicious, and when after the race, shrewd and experienced men—not the foolish public who generally lose their temper when they lose their money, and immediately proclaim their certain conviction that a robbery has been committed, but cool-headed men who know what racing is—are deliberately of opinion that dishonesty has been practised. Stewards not seldom hear such whispers—if the comments are confined to whisperings—and do nothing. There may be, and often is, a simple explanation of what has seemed inexplicable except on the ground of roguery ; and if only to clear characters that are besmirched, the Stewards should enquire into such cases ;



especially as, if they feel themselves unable to decide, they can always report the matter to the Stewards of the Jockey Club, leaving the onus of decision on them.'

My own opinion is that there is very little wrong with the present Stewardship of the Turf. Where there are mere figure-heads acting, they invariably have as their mentor someone who is a 'live wire,' whose advice they follow when there is an objection, or enquiry into the running of certain horses, or the conduct of jockeys. It may be fatuous and just a little snobbish to print annually on race-cards a list of Stewards of high degree, most of whom never by any chance put in an appearance (neither are they expected to put in an appearance), to act in the capacity to which they are appointed.

Some of the most active Stewards of to-day—Lord Lonsdale, Lord Durham, and Lord Hamilton of Dalzell for instance—take their duties very seriously, and do not 'coffee-house' in the paddock almost till the 'off' is sounded, and then climb into the Stewards' stand to see what they can of the race, but frequently go down to the starting post and to various other points on the course to see what exactly is taking place at divers stages of each race. This undoubtedly gives them much better opportunities than even the 'crow's nests' which have been erected on some courses to facilitate the observation of the Stewards. The knowledge that there are motor traps on certain roads makes car drivers cautious not to infringe the law. The knowledge that there are experienced and astute Stewards at various points of a race-course acts as a preventive from any deliberate riding wide at the turns, from galloping horses' heads off in the early stages of a race (or 'on the far side'), so that they will have shot their bolt and 'beaten themselves' before the finish; or other practices as old as the hills, but not yet altogether obsolete, when it is thought there is a clear field for them to be attempted. There is an old adage, 'The opportunity to do ill-deeds oft makes ill-deeds done.' Really active, knowledgeable, alert Stewards, by their very presence, frustrate many such opportunities and thereby help to make the Turf cleaner and more honest. But, I repeat, there always will be 'the besting

'brigade' to deal with, the rogues and scoundrels who don't stand to lose much in prestige, character, or social position, but who *do* stand to gain if they can 'get away' with their nefarious schemes. They do not last long on the Turf, are usually suspect, are not sportsmen, and often bring about the downfall of others before their own 'number is put up.' As I have said already, the unfortunate thing is that as one villain is unmasked there is at least another ready to take his place.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE CLERK OF THE COURSE

THE Clerk of the Course is the stage manager who is responsible for all the detail of the meetings at which he acts in that capacity. Even if he has a local secretary for each fixture to do the donkey work, he has to answer for any shortcomings or rifts in the administrative lute. Apart from so understanding racing that he can draw up a programme to appeal to owners, trainers, and the public, he must essentially be a business man, possessed of administrative powers, quick to think in an emergency, deaf to the crowds of importuners who dog his footsteps, but ready to listen with courteous sympathy to the suggestions, complaints, and opinions of those who patronise his meetings either by giving him entries or by paying for admission, and, in addition, give a hearing to the hints offered by jockeys as to the dangers and inconveniences which, in their opinion, are to be found on the course.

Some Clerks of Courses are not so patient as they might be, and are rather 'short' and tactless with those who have the temerity to make suggestions. Dear old Miles I'Anson, who had the clerkship of nearly all the meetings between Doncaster and the top of Scotland, was one of the most courteous of men, in fact *too* courteous, too anxious to please everyone (an impossible task probably even in Heaven), and too conscientious. People wasted his time and often worried him into a state of nerves with trivialities. But he had only to ask for entries for races which appeared to be filling badly and they were forthcoming and at once, simply because the man himself was so respected and beloved. In the days when his still living brother William had a big string of

horses in training at Malton, he was a tower of strength to Miles, and helped him out with many a programme which looked like having a very small appeal to the public. Miles was so gentle, so generous, and so kind-hearted that he was imposed upon right and left by the army—rather diminished these days—of men and women who considered, or at any rate tried to persuade the C. of C.s, that they should have their racing for nothing and be admitted free into every paddock, if not county enclosure and luncheon room. What a free list poor Miles used to send down to the owners', trainers', and jockeys' gate ! Even the liverish Michael Pigg (later clerk of Ripon and Picton) couldn't keep the importuners away from his chief, though I once heard him explode at York when a 'has been' persuaded Mr. Miles to put his name down on the list, took a race-card without so much as 'by your leave,' and then asked for a luncheon ticket. 'Send him up in a cab too,' said Michael, who was really a better judge of character than his master.

Sitting in judgment on who *has* and who has *not* claim to pass through the paddock gates without 'parting' always seems to me one of the most unpleasant duties Clerks of Courses have to undertake, especially at the smaller meetings. There is much less annoyance in this respect at the more important fixtures, and possibly the general public in the paddock are able to get much more enjoyment when immune from the pestering of those free list impecunious 'winner finders.'

If this same general public are to a great extent ignorant of any but the titular duties of other race officials, they are still more so with regard to those which the clerkship of a race meeting entails. That official is responsible for the measurements of the various courses being accurate, and for the course itself being in proper order. He has, as already stated, to draw up the programme for each meeting in accordance with the season of the year and with the type of race that is catching on elsewhere. He must see that the conditions are fool-proof (which isn't always the case), that the programme is duly advertised in *The Racing Calendar* (an expensive but essential luxury this is too !) the requisite number of times.

He has to watch the forfeits and scratchings so that his race-card may show only possible starters. He has the compiling of these race-cards with pedigrees, ages, names of trainers, and the colours in which the horses will be ridden. As race-cards are left till the last moment to prepare, the wonder is, not that there are errors, but that there are not *more*. In Canada the past form of horses is given as well as other information, and very complicated the cards appear to us over here. There is a good deal of grumbling in England at some fixtures for which there is a very big entry list, at the cramped, crowded, and difficult to follow character of the race-cards. One does sometimes feel that in view of the profit that accrues from these publications at important meetings, a few more leaves might be added when the entries are so numerous that the card is certain to be a cause of irritation to those who try to follow racing intelligently. Compiling of race-cards has always been a difficult matter, as the result has always been a bone of contention and criticism. Just one bit of old-time evidence as proof. A Turf critic of 1802 said :

‘ It has long been a custom, from what mistaken notion of extreme politeness I know not, for the clerks of country courses to insert in their advertisements a “ request ” that the jockeys will, at the place of entrance, declare the colour they are going to ride in, which request is never paid the least respect to, but invariably held in the most ineffable contempt. This fact being incontrovertibly established, permit me to ask why these gentlemen (either stewards or the clerks of courses) should meanly stoop to “ request ” of these party-coloured nondescripts as a favour what they are privileged to demand as a right ; not only as a right upon the base of equity, but as a right in the cause of justice, which is to take out of the hands of the most designing and abandoned villains one of the many means by which a simple, undesigning, harmless sportsman is so frequently robbed of his money to a certainty, without the chance of winning a guinea. This, I conceive, would instantly be effected if noblemen and gentlemen who are now, and may in future, become the Stewards of Races, would enjoin their deputies to announce in their advertisements a N.B. : “ That any jockey (or the

person attending the horse) not declaring *bona fide* in what colour the horse will be rode, should not be entitled to receive the Plate though in other respects he might have won.” ’

The engaging of officials may either fall to the lot of the Clerk of the Course or the Directors. In any case the Clerk has to notify them and to see that they are provided with those things necessary to carrying out their several duties—the Judge with his assistant to hoist the numbers in the frame at the box, the Starter with his horse, assistant, and flagmen, the Clerk of the Scales with scales in order and assistant. The principal gatemen—licensed officials too—are usually appointed by the Clerk of Course, though he may leave the selection of subordinate officials—the doctor, the veterinary surgeon—to the man on the spot, who also provides the number-board men, ambulance men, ‘off’ trumpeter, weighing-room telephonist, race-card sellers, paddock and course scavengers, and so forth.

Policing meetings is another important duty which falls to the lot of the Clerk of the Course. It now costs more to police most fixtures than it took to run them in their entirety—stake money included—in the days of our grandsires. Apart from the local and county police there are also in addition the plain clothes race police to pay—in fact nowadays it requires a whole battalion of salaried men to run many fixtures.

The following balance sheet, drawn up in 1867 by C. Macklin on behalf of the Redcar Race Committee, gives one an insight into the internal economy of a one-day fixture at that period, and the interior economy. Redcar Races in those days were run on the sands. There was, of course, no charge to spectators, and the profits from the temporary grand stand went to the joiner who erected it. A condition the Committee made with him was that he should erect a judge’s box (hitherto a manure cart or a bathing machine had been used by the judge), and the starting and winning post, without charge. The only income therefore was a subscription collected by seven members of the Committee and entrance fees. The former totalled £47 10s. 4d., whilst £33 was received in entries—the whole of the receipts in 1867

being £80 10s. 4d. The disbursements left a balance of £2 17s. 6d., and were as follows : Mr. T. Masterman £12, Mr. Whittaker £5, Mr. Skeene £10, Mr. Voakes £31 10s. (The whole of the stake money was £50 so I cannot reconcile these amounts), present to police £1, Mr. Bowes £1, Bogie (a fisherman) 5s., Assistant Secretary one year's salary £1, printing £4 9s., stationery 10s. 1d., postage and refreshments for Committee after Races £2 12s. 6d, small accounts £4 6s. 3d. Total expenses, £77 12s. 10d.

To give some idea of the small staff Clerks of Courses had to engage half a century ago, let me quote an old balance sheet before me drawn up by the late Thomas Craggs, who was Clerk of the Course at Ripon, Stockton, Newcastle, Kelso, and elsewhere. These figures apply to the first-named meeting :

Thomas Craggs' salary and travelling expenses									
for the year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£20 0 0
Richard Johnson, judging and handicapping	-								15 0 0
John Ridley, starting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10 0 0
William Webber, bill-posting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0 2 0
George Bagley, course gateman	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 10 0
Messrs. Weatherby, advertising and receiving									
nominations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6 19 0
Advertising in newspapers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14 10 0

No police to be paid for, only one salaried gateman, and apparently all the other assistants honorary or dispensed with. Of course in those days there were few gate-money meetings and the public didn't expect much in the way of comfort. The stake money was small and subscribed locally, whilst there was a condition in some races that the winner paid £5 or £10 to the judge, so that his fee was assured. I am able through the courtesy of Mr. Henry Crossley, the chairman of the directors of the up-to-date and old established Wetherby meeting, to add some further statistics of to-day and yesterday, interesting both from a comparative point of view, and also to illustrate how the army of assistants to be engaged and commanded by the Clerk of the Course, or his deputy, has grown. Mr. Crossley says :

' When Wetherby Races took place on the old course (up

to 1890) Mr. W. Clarke was Clerk of the Course, and his expenses did not come to £10 a year. In those days all the officials, with the exception of the Judge and the Starter, worked for the love of the game. The Secretary had a salary of £20 per annum, he being the highest paid official. Of course since those days the administrative work at Wetherby, as at all race meetings, has grown enormously, and now a clerk has to be kept as well as a secretary. In addition, we have a manager as well as a Clerk of the Course. The Starter, too, has to have assistance with the gates. On Easter Monday we have no less than 132 men engaged, apart from the officials, and 83 policemen. On the old course the meeting was carried out with about 15 men and 20 policemen. Then, too, we have a staff of men working more or less constantly on and about the course.'

The Mayor of Oxford in 1816 swore in twenty foot constables and two on horseback to keep the course clear, and so well they seemed to have succeeded that a writer in the *Sporting Magazine* referred to the wonderful novelty never before witnessed in connection with Oxford races—'that the course was kept clear.'

Years ago at Catterick the only expense incurred in preparing the course for racing seems to have been the payment of 2s. per day to an old woman for gathering stones a day or two before each meeting. Owners and trainers in those times didn't pay much heed to the state of the running track, whilst jockeys appear to have been willing (or compelled) to risk their necks amongst hills and holes. It must have required a bit of courage to ride in some places a century ago. But after all courage is only the fear of being afraid. To-day the Clerks of Courses hear about it if all their efforts to get the course into bowling-green condition have not been entirely successful—or are not considered so by some of the never-satisfied hypercritical brigade, who are such a thorn in the sides of the C.-of-C.s.

So early as 1664 the 'Clerk of the Race' received £1 from the winner of the Town Plate at Newmarket in view of his responsibilities to keep the track 'plain and free from holes and cart ruts.' Thus it will be seen that there was



*some* effort made to keep the course in order. 'The Clerk of the Race' had other duties. He had to receive the stake money before any horse started; he was to 'summon the riders to start again at the end of half-an-hour by the signal of drum, trumpet, or any other way, setting up an hour-glass for that purpose.' So at headquarters there was an attempt at this early date to secure punctuality.

Even before this there seems to have been a recognised Clerk of the Course at Lincoln, who, *inter alia*, in 1617, caused a piece of ground 450 yards long to be railed and corded with 'ropes and hoopes on bothe sides in order that the horses that ronned there were seen fayre.'

Of course in the happy-go-lucky, free-and-easy, come-day-go-day times, they were not at all concerned if racing commenced an hour or two late, or if delays during the afternoon resulted in the one o'clock race being run at half-past three. Everyone was out to make a week of it, there were no trains to catch and, as the cock-fighting in the evening couldn't start till the racing was over, there was nothing at stake. So if the wine and company, the song and jest were good at the race ordinary at the principal hotel in the town, the Stewards, their friends and the officials didn't rise to wend their way (often in procession with a band playing at their head), to the course till they thought they would. There was no S.P. or blower, or money coming back to the ring thena-days, and even if the Clerk of the Course was anxious to keep the advertised time (which it's doubtful if he was), he couldn't move his wine-bibbing Stewards and the local great of the earth who had provided the gunpowder for the meeting. Listen to what an early commentator had to say regarding this dining and wining :

'There are still some meetings where the sociability of an ordinary continues to assemble the gentlemen of the county and those more immediately connected with racing. I must confess I am old-fashioned enough to advocate such meetings. There is something in the English constitution which is vastly improved by a good dinner, and, as companion to a race, ought to be supported. It may truly be said to give a zest to the day's sport : it is the *sauce piquante* which gives a flavour

not to be obtained by any other means : it promotes friendship and causes persons to meet together and form acquaintances which no other occasion can produce. At the social board the little disappointments which the losers have sustained during the morning's amusements are forgotten, and races and matches for succeeding days are formed.

The jolly crew, unmindful of the past,  
The quarry share, their plenteous dinner haste.

'One arrangement, however, I cannot pass over without comment. It is the absurd practice of dining between the morning and afternoon races. This is objectionable in the extreme. In the first place, to attend a single race at twelve o'clock, and return to the town to dine at two, and proceed to the course again at four or five, is horribly disagreeable ; to which must be added the danger which invariably exists from the lower classes having had time to become intoxicated, when they indiscreetly trespass on the course and cause danger not only to themselves but to the jockeys and horses. Another objection is, that it causes racing to be so late that night very frequently comes on before the amusements of the day are over. It is asserted, at the places where this custom prevails, that it is for the benefit to the innkeepers who subscribe to the Fund. I never could ascertain how the benefit arises ; because those who attend the ordinaries, whether at the hotel patronised by the Stewards, or those held at the other houses, will assuredly spend more money, having time to enjoy themselves, than by being hurried away to witness the afternoon racing, which being over, the major part of the spectators retire to their homes. Innkeepers in many cases have been the cause of the ordinaries being discontinued, or thinly attended, solely by their own bad taste in supplying inferior wines. On such occasion they ought to procure the best that can be had. At those places where a good dinner and superior wine are produced, the ordinaries continue to flourish.'

It was Lord George Bentinck who first made an official and decided move towards punctuality on the part of Clerks of Courses and jockeys. He insisted that racing should com-

mence at the advertised time and that the jockeys should be at the post ready to start at the appointed moment. To ensure this punctuality fines were imposed upon Clerks of Courses for delays, and by 1866 it was publicly announced :

‘ The Clerk of the Course at York will regulate his watch by the clock of York Cathedral, and will be fined 5s. for every minute he is behind time in the bell not ringing for the respective races.’

These penalties were applied elsewhere, and not only resulted in making Clerks of Courses realise more fully their responsibility, but also in their ‘ getting a move on,’ and organising their meetings better. From this period onwards the office became less of a sinecure, and Clerks, with the Jockey Club at their backs, put an end to the wine-bibbing luncheons which so often held up the commencement of the proceedings on the course. A number of the smaller country fixtures of one day a year continued pretty much on the old lines till their end came. They were always a law unto themselves, and the local officials constituted themselves into a self-contained Jockey Club and a Messrs. Weatherby’s of their own. It was *their* meeting, and what had anyone in London, or anywhere else, to do with it? How they ever got their programmes out at all defeats some of us in view of the illiteracy and ignorance of Turf procedure of owners with whom they had to deal. Even yet at some little N.H. meetings one finds a lingering reminder of what the old-time Clerks of Courses had to contend with, as witness the following amusing entry Capt. Giles Bates received in March 1926 for Rothbury :

‘ Honoured Sir :—We have a grey mare—a good ‘un. You’ll know her, so enter her in some race—whatever you think will suit her best. Hopping you are well as leaves me at present, and that you’ll chuse what you think best for the mare.—I am, yours, etc.’

No name, no age, no pedigree, no colours, *no nothing!* and on the day entries closed, too !

The following letter which the late Mr. Miles I’Anson received in 1906 is perhaps a prize-winner—how we laughed about it at the time :

‘ As you are one of the main men at Thirsk races will you put our Tom’s chestnut gelding into the thirsk races to run which I

am willing to pay for if he is tret as he should be tret in what he has to carry seeing as how he has only run at two flaps which I mention to you private and which our tom will ride him at Thirsk if you don't give him overmuch wait. He is not quite thoroughbred but a blood sort and I would be willing to sell if you would find me a customer and make you a present too. Anyone will tell you about the gelding as he's well known. Perhaps yow will borrow the things for Tom to ride in on the course as we haven't any except Tom has some hunting boots which will mebbe do. The horse can be seen here any day you come so no more at present.

*P.S.*—John Osborne said I'd be able to train him at home better than he would so you'll see for yourself but I'll pay at the time as anythink might happen between now and Thirsk races which I attends reggler and has done for years.

*P.S.*—Don't overdo him with wait and I supposes there'll be nothink to pay to come in this year seeing as how I'm fraternising the meeting.'

Here is another communication which Miles I'Anson once forwarded to me, as he put it, 'to add to your collection':

'I've got a bill for our horse being entered at Ripon and Pontefract but it never ran having died previous with a stoppage in the bools. No man pays nothink in no way to no one for a dead horse and I am put about at getting this blue paper from your London solicitor men (*i.e.* Messrs. Weatherby). No true bred sportsman would have done such a trick. I'm willing to send you a ham but I pays nothink to no one in London and have sent no back answer.'

If a collection of letters received by Clerks of Courses during the latter part of last century had been kept, it would have given one a wonderful insight into the many difficulties which they had to overcome owing to the carelessness and utter ignorance regarding the Rules of Racing displayed by many of those with whom they had to deal. Of course, Clerks of Courses had themselves to be *au fait* with the Rules of Racing backwards, though even they make mistakes sometimes. Let me quote just one instance:

At the Durham meeting of 1883 Mr. T. Devereux ran a mare called Wandering Kate, which was second in the Trial Plate to Mr. J. Martin's Jovial, by Jolly Friar out of Hermitess.

Wandering Kate was only beaten a neck, and the Stockton sportsman bought the winner for two hundred guineas. On the following day Fagan rode Wandering Kate and won the Lanchester Selling Plate. Tom Green then bought Mr. Devereux's mare. But it is of Jovial that there is an interesting story to tell. Although a Stocktonian bred and born, Mr. Devereux had some prejudice against his home meeting, and Jovial was the only one of the many horses he owned that ran there. This was a few weeks after Durham, and Jovial was unplaced on the first day, was beaten a length in the Thornaby Selling Stakes on the second day, and by the same distance on the third day in the Grand Selling Stakes. York was his next outing, and here Jovial ran twice, being second on the concluding day to Lord Zetland's Mrs. Candour, which he thereupon bought for 180 guineas. Then came Manchester, at which a curious incident occurred. There were only two horses saddled for the Selling Welter Plate—Mr. F. Archer's Passaic, 10 st. 12 lb., 5 y.o. (owner up), and Mr. T. Devereux's Jovial, 10 st. 13 lb., 3 y.o. (Platt). Passaic, who had won the City and Suburban and was 4 to 1 on, got the race by a short head. Mr. Devereux was urged to object, as Archer was considered to have been guilty of foul riding, having, in the opinion of Mr. Devereux, his friends and others, wilfully shut in Platt on the rails so that he could not get in front. However, Mr. Devereux argued that he was a 'little man' and Archer was a 'big bug,' so that the Stewards would be much more likely to accept his evidence than that of a spectator. So he declined to object on the grounds of foul riding, though Platt assured him he would have won if he could have got through. To avoid the advice and criticism of friends and strangers Mr. Devereux hurried to a quiet corner to see how much the winner made. To his astonishment Passaic had been taken away and there was no sale. Off went Mr. Devereux to the Clerk of the Course, who said it had been arranged that the winner should not be put up. Thereupon Mr. Devereux lodged a protest against the winner receiving the stakes, but this was overruled by the Stewards—the Hon. George Lambton and Mr. Townley-Parker—who estreated the £5 deposited. Then came Mr.

'Judex' Bradley, the leading tipster of the day, upon the scene. Said he to the Stocktonian :

'You have good grounds for two objections—one for foul riding, one for the rules of racing not being complied with. They've done it twice on you. Give notice of appeal to the Jockey Club now and you're bound to win.'

So Mr. Devereux did so, and the *Racing Calendar* contains the following note appended to the Manchester race :

'The owner of the second horse having objected to the winner receiving any stake whatever, on the ground that the horse was not put up for auction after the race, the Stewards over-ruled the objection, considering that as only 100 guineas instead of 150 sovereigns were given in the Plate the winner was not liable to be put up, but allowed an appeal to the Stewards of the Jockey Club, who decided that the race was null and void, inasmuch as the conditions of Rule 41 were not complied with.'

Mr. Devereux had not to wait long to 'draw' over Jovial, for he took him up to Kelso, backed him well, won the opening 'Seller' and let his horse go to Tom Green for 150 guineas. For his new owner he won the following week at Edinburgh and was bought in for 200 guineas.

In those days Mr. Craggs of Stockton was Clerk of the Course at Kelso, and if he was short of entries he used to send for Mr. Devereux and get him to put all his string in on the understanding that he would have no entrance fee to pay unless the horses started.

Reverting to the Archer contretemps at Manchester, there was no bad blood between them afterwards. Archer rode for Devereux, and Devereux worked commissions for Archer. He says he found Archer a bad loser, and though honest as the day, was not too ready to settle up his losses.

In these days of multiplicity of returns, of shareholders and luxury in racing, there is infinitely more clerical work for the Clerks of Courses to attend to. Mention of luxury reminds me of the days when owners engaged their own stabling where they could, and often brought their forage with them. Their lads frequently slept with their horses to guard against 'nobblers,' and the Clerk of the Course

required the animals produced for his inspection at the time of entry. Nowadays free stabling, free forage, free accommodation for lads, payment of railway fares one way for unplaced horses, all have to be arranged for by the Clerk of the Course, either personally or through his deputy, the local secretary. Thus before, at, and after fixtures of any importance the official mentioned has a very busy time of it attending to a hundred and one details of which even many regular racing men know little or nothing. If there are objections or enquiries by the Stewards, he has to be present to act as adjutant and often as advisor, to take a note of the evidence and findings and report both to Messrs. Weatherby for publication in *The Calendar*. Prior to this the Press is to be supplied with the official statement. The Clerk has to be everywhere, to know everyone, to be ready at a moment's notice to supply substitutes for any missing official—be he Steward, or number-board man—and to be repository of a hundred complaints as to the conduct of gatemen who are only carrying out his orders, as to mistakes on the cards, stabling, and so on. He has to deal with scores of applications from those who feel they have a right to lunch at the expense of the executive, to take their wives and families to the county stand, and so on. A Clerk of the Course ought to have no nerves, infinite patience, little sentiment, abundant tact, and not to be over-worried by the threats of those who 'will never run another horse at your meeting.'

## CHAPTER VII

### THE HANDICAPPER

A public handicapper should be a man of independent circumstances, in every sense of the word, and beyond suspicion of accepting illicit compensation for favours received ; attached to no stable, a good judge of the condition of the horse, but with more intimate knowledge of the dispositions of owners and trainers, he should be a spectator of every race of any importance in the United Kingdom ; and his station should be at the distance post, where horses are sometimes pulled, not at the winning post, where they are extended ; he should never make a bet, and he should treat all remarks which may be made about his handicaps with the utmost indifference.

ADMIRAL ROUS.

JOHN POND in the first of his series of *Calendars* (1751) gives us a clue as to the origin of the terms Handicap and Handicapper in the rules he quotes for 'A post and handicap match.' Regarding the latter he says :

'A Handy-Cap Match is for A, B, and C to put an equal sum into a hat, C, which is the handicapper, makes a match for A and B which, when perused by them, they put their hands into their pockets and draw them out closed, then they open them together, and if both have money in their hands, the match is confirmed ; if neither have money it is no match : in both cases the hand-capper draws all the money out of the hat ; but if one has money in his hand and the other none, then it is no match ; and he that has money in his hand is entitled to the deposit in the hat.'

It would have been more illuminating if Pond had told us the 'equal sum had to be put into a *cap*,' but there we must leave it, and there the Jockey Club left it till 1851, when the word 'hat' was dropped but the title of the official retained.



Pepys wrote in his diary under date Sept. 18th, 1660 :

‘To the Mitre Tavern in Wood St, a house of the greatest note in London. Here some of us fell to handicap, a sport which I never knew before, which was very good.’

Dr. Brewer suggests that this game gave to the Turf the words ‘handicap’ and ‘handicapper.’ He explains the game thus :

‘A game of cards not unlike Loo, but with this difference—the winner of one trick has to put in a double stake, the winner of two tricks a triple stake, and so on. Thus : if six persons are playing and the general stake is 1s., and A gains three tricks, he gains 6s. and has to hand in the cap or pool 3s. for the next deal. Suppose A gains two tricks and B one, then A gains 4s. and B 2s., and A has to stake 3s. and B 2s. for the next deal.’

If racing Judges and Starters come in for a fair share of behind-their-backs abuse (for it may be an expensive business and one rarely resorted to, to give licensed Turf officials a hectic ‘piece of your mind’), Handicappers are more frequently still in hot water and more open to both responsible and irresponsible criticism. The late Mr. A. E. Watson, in speaking of the duties of various race officials, said :

‘That a Handicapper should give general satisfaction is, of course, not for a moment to be expected, as there are many owners who really do not want a handicap with which no fault can be found, but a compilation of weights which gives their horse an advantage. Very palpable blunders are, however, not rare. They sometimes arise from carelessness in trusting to recollection instead of looking up form ; sometimes they are due to haste, a Handicapper undertaking work which he cannot possibly do in the short time he can give to it ; and not seldom they are a consequence of too close adherence to book form with no special knowledge behind it. Thus, it has been previously pointed out that a horse may win by a neck and have 3 lb. in hand or 3 st. ; and unless the Handicapper sees the race, and is a judge of riding, he is likely to go far astray. Neglect of this last essential led to results which induced the Jockey Club at the beginning of 1897 to make an addition to the Rule of Racing which deals

with Handicappers to limit the work they do, and to declare they must attend the meetings for which they have adjusted weights, either personally or by licensed deputy.'

Apropos of the impossibility of a Handicapper giving general satisfaction, a story is told to the effect that Lord Glasgow once got a friend to read over to him a newly-framed handicap. As each name and weight was cited Lord Glasgow made some such remark as 'too much!' 'bad horse!' 'not in it!' etc., until at last the bottom weight was arrived at, and his friend said, 'that is all'; to which Lord Glasgow replied, 'Well, then, *none of them* can win.'

Apart from being a good story it was also the highest compliment which could possibly be paid to the Handicapper in question. The ideal handicap should be so framed that the whole of the horses would run a dead-heat. No matter how skilful, how observant, how astute a judge of pace, condition, jockeyship, and 'intentions' a Handicapper may be, it is impossible to attain the ideal handicap insomuch as some horses 'come on' as others lose condition. Horses, like athletes, cannot remain at the top of their form for long together, whilst others, which cannot 'travel through muck,' make quite a different show when the going is on 'the top.' On the other hand some blood 'uns with bad feet or legs, will not extend themselves when the ground rattles. All these various conditions—not to mention those uncertain and 'humoury' horses which are in the mood to run one day and stick their toes in the ground 'steadfast and immovable' the next—defeat the Handicapper's efforts and sometimes deceive him as does change of jockeys. Of course everyone knows that those entrusted with the making of imposts are daily up against systematic efforts to hoodwink them. It was Spenser who wrote :

What man so wise, what earthly wit so rare,  
As to decry the crafty, cunning train,  
By which Deceit doth mask in vision fair,  
And seem like Truth, whose shape she well can feign.

Well, the Handicapper is supposed to have the eyes of Argus in the head of Janus, the wisdom of Solomon and Minerva, the memory of Magliabechi, the mind of a judge,

and the ability of a King's Counsel to explain his line of conduct. Though the official record of races in *The Calendar* is of assistance to the Handicapper, the distances there cited would often be most misleading to the Handicappers had they not their own observations to qualify them. Occasionally horses are run as 'big as bulls' and looking more as though they should be at an agricultural show than on a race-course. At other times horses are run out of their distance or with boys on their backs who are not strong enough to prevent them from speedily beating themselves. Other horses may appear (either by accident or design) to be taking any but the shortest way home. These are all matters not indicated in the placings but which the Handicapper has to note for future guidance. Indeed, he has to be up to all the 'tricks of the trade,' from 'doping' to 'Johnny Armstrong.'

A Handicapper, who once wrote his views on his office and duties, was right when he said: 'There can be no manner of doubt that the highest trial to which a Handicapper has to submit is to weight a large number of second or third class (not necessarily selling platers) in a district which is more or less out of his own beat, and where he has not the advantage of knowing the form of the majority of the horses, nor the ways of the owners and trainers; for there are times when a knowledge of human nature is a great blessing and assistance, and no one will deny that such a knowledge is material to the framer of weights in horse racing, and when *the form of owner, trainer, and horse alike has to be taken into consideration*, though the writer is bound to admit that the morality of the Turf is not really so bad as it is frequently painted.'

Most trainers are anxious not to have their horses exposed when they *do* win, and many a race has been lost through jockeys endeavouring to carry out their orders on 'fancied horses,' not to 'show them up to the Handicapper.' This is perhaps very human, and there is nothing immoral or even unsporting in it, even though the underlying objective may be, if not to deceive the Handicapper, certainly not to invite him to add more than he otherwise would for a win. The experienced official weight-giver already quoted said:

‘ What has always seemed to me one of the weakest points in our handicapping system is the right that is claimed by any person who considers himself aggrieved in the matter of handicapping to call the official framer of weights before the Stewards and ask for an explanation. It is practically impossible to frame any handicap of any size out of twenty that will not, on the face of it, appear hard on the nominators or the owners of one or two of the horses. Horses are not the mere machines so many suppose them to be ; at times their running is contradictory, more especially during the early part of their career on the Turf, and their first appearance is frequently marred by “greenness” which practice rapidly dissipates ; and consequently a revolution in their form appears. The book tells you nothing here ; but careful study and discernment throw timely light on the very many obscure difficulties with which you are constantly confronted. The Stewards of race meetings, though as a rule most honourable men, and most anxious to do their duty, are by no means well versed in the technicalities of handicapping ; there is not time, as a rule, thoroughly to thrash out all the ins and outs of horses’ running, both direct and collateral ; a certain race has to be fixed upon, and the book taken as a guide ; it may be or may not be right, but the result is that Handicappers are too closely tied down to the book for fear of a complaint being lodged against their handicapping, consequently they are debarred from handicapping men unless they are prepared to prove that in such and such a race a horse was not running upon his merits. This is, of course, a strong statement not always easy of corroboration, and in its absence a horse that has been conspicuously “down the course” may roll home, though, except for this weak spot, as it has been termed, considerably more weight might have been placed on its back ; but you are unfortunately tied down by the book—“the book and nothing but the book.” ’

A writer in the *Sporting Times* in July 1925 rather bore out what the Handicapper said, as witness the following :

The next move will have to be the formation of a Handicappers’ Union ! The much-criticised little coterie of official weight adjustors will then be able to feel ‘ that life

is worth living again.' It will be considered a crime against a union member if any furious owner rushes in to scratch all his horses, or even approaches a Handicapper on a race-course to ask him a question. The Handicapper has to put up with a lot of this sort of thing, for many owners and others seem to think that the official is a perambulating book of form. I have always found that the man who has made a mistake will admit it if he is approached in the right way, and such mistakes are bound to occur. Experienced Handicappers like Mr. T. F. Dawkins, Major Lee, Mr. Fawcett, Mr. Rowland Leigh, and Mr. Kenneth Gibson are, however, entitled to hold their respective opinions and get out of the groove at times. Mr. Rowland Leigh, who framed the Lincoln weights, has many more meetings these days. He comes from a well-known and well-situated racing family. Major Lee, who is getting on in years and has had an exceptional lot of family grief to bear during and since the War, used, as you may all remember, to be a well-known trainer, having Royal Flush in his stable. I always found him appreciative of criticism if it is fair, and he candidly admitted a clerical error in a Kempton case last autumn. He was largely instrumental in introducing Mr. Kenneth Gibson to the harassing business. The old Eton and Essex wicket-keeper is such an excellent rider that it is a pity he cannot find more time to appear in the saddle. All Anglo-Indians swear by Mr. Fawcett, who spent many years over there, and is still so closely linked up with the Calcutta Turf Club. Mr. Fawcett is independent in his handicaps, though not quite so 'revolutionary' as when he first started over here a few years back. Mr. Dawkins is Clerk of the Course at Kempton, and has filled a similar position at Hurst Park since Mr. Joe Davis died. The Jockey Club Handicapper is rather quiet and reserved, but one with a decided charm of manner, which he turns to good account. Major G. Wilmot, a brother of Lingfield's 'Boss,' Mr. Fred Wilmot, has taken up handicapping over here since his return from abroad. Like his brother, he seems to have the hang of it all right. Col. D. H. Leslie is another of the newer recruits, I fancy. He makes the jumping weights at Derby, Southwell, etc.,

while Mr. C. L. Penrhyn-Hornby is responsible for the Chester Cup. Mr. L. E. Woods makes the weights for some of the far northern gatherings, and I cannot say that I envy him the task. I should go grey in a night trying to unravel some of the form intricacies up there. Only in Poethlyn's year, immediately following the War, did Mr. Topham delegate the making of the Grand National weights to somebody else, for he had only just been demobilised and he did not feel sufficiently *au fait* with current jumping form. Mr. Topham is wedded to his beloved Aintree, and I must say that there are no better run meetings in the country than Manchester, York, and Liverpool. Mr. Topham, with his neat little moustache and carefully-prized manner, always looks to me as though he had just come out of a band-box. He is as reserved as Mr. Dawkins, but equally as popular with all ranks. Mr. Topham's Grand National weights are to me always the most interesting of the season, and he spends the greater part of the year compiling them. Aintree running gives him the inspiration. He used to dislike having to give a smashing fencer more than 12 st. 7 lb., as much as he did the presence in the entry of those 'rags' which could go on the 9 st. 7 lb. minimum. So he worked to get a fair maximum and the restoration of 10 st. bottom weight. I cannot even imagine an infuriated woman-owner going up to either Mr. Topham or Mr. Dawkins—as one old woman once did in the paddock—and threaten to horsewhip him because her gee had got more weight than she expected. Mr. Bob Verral once told me that an irate old gal told him angrily that he looked like a second-rate comedian. Nobody used openly to tackle Admiral Rous, for that peppery old sailor had an awkward 'way with him.' It was on record that when an owner hinted ever so diplomatically once that he might have been a wee bit less harsh the Admiral actually put up the particular horse a further stone in his next big handicap. It is always said, too, that the horse won the race ; but that sounds too good a story to me.

Admiral Rous was the only Handicapper I have ever heard of who received a complaint that a horse had not sufficient weight. It was the Earl of Glasgow who got the

Admiral to increase the impost he had given to one of his horses, considering that it was unfair to the other animals in the race that his own should be so lightly burdened. It was in 1855 that the Admiral was appointed public Handicapper by the Jockey Club. He had in 1850 published *The Laws and Practice of Horse-Racing*, in which he expressed the view that 'every great handicap offers a premium to fraud, for horses are constantly started without any intention of winning, merely to hoodwink the Handicapper.'

It is not very often a Handicapper discloses his weights prior to their appearance in the *Calendar*, but so highly did Admiral Rous value the opinion of the late Mr. George Hodgman that he frequently consulted with him as to handicaps he had made. At least once the Admiral was saved from making a great error. In 1861 a four-year-old colt named Gridiron, by Daniel O'Rourke, was entered for the Cesarewitch, and in his original handicaps the 'Dictator' had allotted him 6 st. 4 lb. 'With that weight,' said Hodgman, 'the race is a gift for him.' Quoting Gridiron's past form, the Admiral rather 'pooh-poohed' this idea, remarking: 'Why they only gave two hundred for him.' 'Well!' retorted G. H., 'I am prepared to give 1500 guineas for him if you can buy him.' Admiral Rous tried to do so, and finding that neither 1500 guineas or 2000 guineas would tempt the owner to sell he altered the weight to 7 st. 13 lb., under which the horse ran so well as to suggest he would have had a hollow victory at 6 st. 4 lb.

The late Mr. R. Ord, one of the most gentle and courteous of men, always took his duties as Handicapper very seriously and was tremendously conscientious and painstaking in his execution of them. He never became hardened to either the overbearing or cynical type of 'owner,' whose words and actions I know often entered like iron into his soul. Few men watched races with more intelligence and intuitive knowledge of what was actually to be read between the lines, and it was usually those who flattered themselves on their cleverness and imagined that he had not the introspection he possessed, who 'screamed' when they saw how their horses had been treated in later engagements. Mr. Ord, of course, came from

a long line of sportsmen, and he could form a very shrewd, and usually very accurate, idea as to which animals were really fit to run for their lives, which were backward in condition, and which were actually ridden out. Mr. Ord made handicaps for his own amusement long before he was appointed a Jockey Club official. By chance Lord Durham happened to see some of these and was so struck by one he saw on the back of a menu card at a Gimcrack Dinner that he recommended the Squire of Sands Hall, Sedgefield, to the Jockey Club. Mr. Ord's first handicap was for an overnight race at Newcastle Autumn Meeting in 1896—The Scurry Handicap—for which there were twenty-six entries. He eventually succeeded Mr. Ford, and on the death of Major George Egerton automatically came in for his share of impost allotting. In 1898 he was responsible for framing 145 handicaps, for which there were 1232 acceptances, Major Egerton<sup>1</sup> in this, his last season, making 136 handicaps. Major Egerton died at York on Sept. 2nd, 1898, after having been a race official for twelve years, and six weeks later Mr. 'Judge' Clark, who had more than three times that Turf service to his credit, died at the age of 82. Mr. R. Ord died at Sedgefield on March 14th, 1920, and Mr. J. B. Dennis, who had assisted him from 1910 to his death, took out a Handicapper's licence under National Hunt Rules in 1924, his first meeting being Sedgefield. In 1926 he was granted a licence under Jockey Club Rules, the first fixture at which he acted being Newcastle. Mr. Dennis, who lives at Bishop Auckland, had a long training under Mr. Ord and bids fair to make a name for himself.

In the early days of the Turf the Stewards seem to have been responsible for handicaps, for the 1839 writer already quoted, who detailed the duties of various race officials, offered the following suggestions which make amusing reading to-day :

'The Stewards of Country Meetings will frequently find it necessary to make a handicap for the horses on the last

<sup>1</sup> The Duchess of Montrose is credited with having said to the burly Major : 'By the way you handicap my horses one is inclined to think you want to ride them yourself. It is not, however, my intention to employ you as my jockey.'



day. Some difficulty arises if there are horses to be handicapped which have not run at the meeting. In order to do justice, the running of such horses as are expected to be entered for the handicap should be carefully attended to. Many, if they cannot win, will be pulled up as soon as their chance is found to be over, for the sake of being more favourably weighted. Their appearance when jockeys come to be weighed should be noticed, when much may be discovered—as to whether the beaten horses could have been nearer at the finish—by observing whether the spur has been used—whether the horse appears distressed—and whether he is long in recovering his wind. The ease with which the winners have won their races may by the same attention in some measure be ascertained ; and their running should also be considered. Horses that have not been running at the meeting can only be handicapped according to their running at other places ; and such as have never appeared in public must be weighted according to their pedigree, and the performance of the produce of their dams, providing any of their produce have started. Practice alone and strict attention to the performance of horses will enable anyone to put a field well together, and Stewards will find the advantage of calling in some experienced tactician as a colleague, should they not feel perfectly conversant with the merits of each horse.'

We now only have 'experienced tacticians,' no Stewards being allowed or required to frame handicaps, either according to the extent which horses have been spurred, or by the other suggested signs or omens.

In 1897 the Jockey Club saw how futile it was to work out weights correctly with the results and official descriptions of races as published in the *Racing Calendar* as the only guide. They recognised how important it is that the officials entrusted with the allocation of imposts should be on the spot to see horses run, and also that they should not have more work in this connection than they can perform with satisfaction to themselves and fairness to owners. Thus they made an addition to the Rules of Racing which applies particularly to the officials with whom I am dealing, so that it now reads :

‘The handicapper shall append to the weights for every handicap the day and hour from which winners will be liable to a penalty, and no alteration shall be made after publication. No handicapper shall hold any other office at a meeting, nor handicap at any other meeting held during the same week, except by express permission of the Stewards of the Jockey Club. He must attend the meeting either personally or by licensed deputy.’

[Just as this book goes to press ‘Audax’ had (on Aug. 27, 1927) some most interesting memories in *Horse and Hound* regarding handicappers which I feel bring this chapter to a fitting conclusion. Says this most authoritative of writers on turf matters :

‘When I first went racing in the seventies Admiral Rous was the chief handicapper, and the work done by the dear old gentleman, whom I knew well, and by others in those days in allotting the weights for handicaps, was extremely casual compared to that which now obtains. For instance, in 1876, when the great coup was brought off with Rosebery, who as a four year old, carrying 7 st. 5 lb., won the Cesarewitch, and a fortnight later captured the Cambridgeshire under 8 st. 5 lb., having incurred a 14 lb. penalty for winning the long-distance event, the original weight given to Speculum’s son, from whom Sunstar and others of great note are descended, was only 6 st. 5 lb. in both races. The Admiral was a very great friend of my grandfather, Wyndham B. Portman, who lived in those days, and for forty-two years in all, at Lower Hare Park, Newmarket, and he usually showed him the weights for these handicaps a few days before they were published. He did so, as usual, in 1876, when going over from Newmarket to dine at Hare Park, and owing to my grandfather telling him that he had heard a whisper that Rosebery, whom George Clement trained at Wantage, was a good horse, although his form showed nothing, the Admiral put up the colt’s weight 14 lb. for each of these handicaps which Rosebery won. A good adjuster of weights after the Admiral’s death at the end of the seventies was Major George Egerton, although he sometimes made terrible blunders, especially so in overnight handicaps ; but no handicapper has ever been the equal of the now official one to the Jockey Club, Mr. T. G. Dawkins, busy at the present time adjusting the weights for the great Newmarket handicaps of this year, which are due to appear in next Thursday’s “Racing Calendar.” Tommy Dawkins, whom I have known very intimately for many years, is not only a splendid judge of racing and form but also the characters of the men connected with the horses, and the person who pits his or her brain against Mr. Dawkins, and supports, at what is usually a very false price, a horse that they imagine he has given too lenient a weight, are often foolish in the extreme. As my readers know, I think that no horse not trained actually in England should be handicapped before it has run three times in this country.’]

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CLERK OF THE SCALES

The Clerk of the Scales shall exhibit the number (as allotted on the official card) of each horse for which a jockey has been weighed out, and shall forthwith furnish the Starter with a list of such numbers, and the numbers shall not be taken down until the horses are started.

If extra weight, or any variation from the weight appearing on the card, be declared at scale for any horse, such weight shall be exhibited with the number ; also any alteration of colours.

He shall in all cases, except under the provision in Rule 151, weigh in the riders of the horses placed by the Judge, and report to the Stewards any jockey not presenting himself to be weighed in.

Except where an automatic weighing machine, of a pattern approved by the Stewards of the Jockey Club is employed, the Clerk of the Scales shall always put 2 lb. extra into the scale to prove that the horse has not carried too much weight.

He shall at the close of each day's racing send a return to the Registry Office of the weights carried in every race, and the names of the jockeys, specifying over-weight, if any.—*The Rules of Racing.*

It always seems to me that the hardest worked official at a race meeting, and the one least in the limelight, is the Clerk of the Scales. In these days of big fields he is 'hard at it' for nearly an hour before racing commences till the first four in the final race have been weighed in. After that he has his returns for the *Racing Calendar* to write up—all the weights, (penalties, allowances, and overweights to be noted), all the jockeys' names to compile, the fines for wrong colours and failure to declare, the prices realised by the winners of the Selling races, the names of the Stewards acting, and other details. From start to finish he has to concentrate his mind every minute of the time, to check what is to be shown on the number board—all its additions as to change of weights and colours before it is hoisted—and to see that it is not

exposed either before and, if possible, not later than, a quarter of an hour before each race is timed to start. Of his many duties and responsibilities the average race-goer has no conception.

There is a strict rule that only those whose business gives them the *entrée*—owners, trainers, jockeys, and officials—are allowed in the weighing-room, and there is always at least one licensed man on guard to prevent the merely curious (or those anxious to have ‘a private word’ with some jockey) from passing through the portals into the province sacred to the Clerk of the Scales. It has always been a marvel to me, not that these officials sometimes get irritable and short tempered, but rather that they manage to keep a hand on the curb rein of their feelings as they do, in view of the hourly causes they have for annoyance—jockeys coming late to the scales, and jockeys who ask them at the last moment to calculate weights, colours which are lost, jockeys who are ready to go to scale but who must wait till the owner, trainer, or person authorised to act puts in an appearance to pass them, inexperienced number-board men who have to be taught their job, assistants at the scale who disappear when most wanted, keeping the judge up-to-date regarding the alteration of colours, and so on and so forth. If racing Judges should be men without nerves, equally should their brother officials at the scale.

In those homely times when racing was more in the nature of a ‘bit of fun’ (I had almost written ‘of real sport’) fields were much smaller than they are to-day, and no one seems to have been concerned whether the two o’clock race started at 2.30 or 3. There was no ‘blower’ then, no money to get back ‘to the ring,’ no trains to catch and no horse-box specials. It is all different now in this age of rush and commercialism, and racing could not be continued as at present unless punctuality was observed. It is the Clerk of the Scales’ job to see that the jockeys are at any rate weighed out in time to get down to the post punctually. It is then the Starter’s ‘pigeon’ as to the ‘off’ being ‘according to plan.’ Those who filled the office half a century (and less) ago were able to act in a dual capacity—to preside at the scales and

when there are big fields jockeys frequently come in to be passed 'for the next' whilst a race is being run. Indeed, this is almost essential to enable the afternoon's sport to be carried out with the necessary expedition.

In 1839, when conditions were, as already stated, much more lax, and when delays appear to have caused no chafing, surprise, or comment, a writer in the *Sporting Magazine* (v. xciv), called attention to the necessity of those acting as race officials knowing their several duties, 'for in the directions given them will in a great measure depend the probability of disputes arising.' Detailing what was expected of 'the man appointed to weigh the jockeys,' he said (the italics being mine) :

'He should be directed to ascertain the name of each jockey and the horse which he is going to ride, and enter these particulars in a book, together with the weight. Should the rider be more than the required weight, a memorandum must be made of that actually carried and a return made to Messrs. Weatherby to that effect. Strict attention should be paid to this as also to declarations, in case of carrying overweight, being made by proper persons in due time. Carrying overweight leads to much imposition, not merely as relates to the betting on the race, but as to the weights imposed in future handicaps. The frequency of jockeys riding several pounds too heavy, *without any notice*, calls for the attention of the Stewards at every country meeting. When the riders are weighed after the race, the person having charge of the scales must be particular as to the correctness of each rider's weight ; and should any one be deficient, having once left the scale, on no account should he be suffered to re-enter it. It is admissible to have the bridle brought to him if required, but to save trouble it is usual to allow one pound for a single and two pounds for a *double bridle*. A circumstance occurred some years ago at Stourbridge which, from want of attention to this point, produced a lawsuit. One of the jockeys was short of weight ; he left the scale and walked a considerable distance down the course in search of the Steward, whom he requested would see him weighed. This was complied with. He was found to be weight, and the race was awarded to his





horse. After a pedestrian tour through a dense crowd he must have been a fool if he could not procure a pound or two to make up the deficiency. It scarcely appears necessary to point out the necessity of a jockey being sufficiently heavy ; but I recollect a circumstance of one having lost a stirrup iron and he was about a quarter of a pound too light. One of the Stewards was inclined to waive the objection upon the principle that so trifling a deficiency could not affect the running of the horse, and would have excused it had not that honest, straightforward fellow Mytton, who was the other Steward, most positively stuck to the point.'

There have been many incidents which have proved how necessary it is for the Clerk of the Scales to be thoroughly *au fait* with his duties, observant, and never distracted (would that some fussy owners and trainers would remember this !). True there are many very watchful eyes when he is weighing-in jockeys after a race, but *he* is the responsible official if everything is not as it should be. Writing in January 1906, the late Mr. John Corlett quoted some evidence which illustrates my point. He said :

'The case of Catch 'em Alive, who, after winning the Cambridgeshire, was for a moment or two disqualified, until it was discovered that the scale had been tampered with, is generally regarded as being the only one of its kind, but, as a matter of fact, it had a predecessor in 1858. It was the interests that were at stake in connection with Catch 'em Alive that gave so much importance to the matter. The disqualification put £30,000 for the moment into the pocket of Lord Westmorland, who could well have done with the money, and it must have been trying indeed when it was taken from him again. The previous case was at Lincoln, when Shafto, with Challoner in the saddle, won the Queen's Plate. On returning to scale, Mr. Shelley, owner of Lifeboat, objected to the winner on the ground that Shafto was short of weight. As, however, Lifeboat did not come into the enclosure, 'D'Orsay' Clarke claimed the race for Mr. Sykes, who was third. It was found that the scales had been tampered with, and that when properly adjusted Shafto was the right weight. Shelley was always known as 'Life-



boat Shelley,' as the horse was somewhat famous and won eleven races that year. Shelley was supposed to have made an attempt to 'get' at Muscovite when that horse won the Cesarewitch, and had the jockeys not been changed, the probability is that the horse would not have won. It is certain that the race ruined Shelley. Mr. Sykes, who was third at Lincoln, belonged to that extraordinary character 'D'Orsay' Clarke, and the jockey was our old friend Fred Bates. Mr. Sykes was a Cesarewitch winner and he kept on winning races till he was ten years old.'

This sensation at Newmarket in October 1863 is of sufficient interest to justify an extended notice, though *The Calendar* reports the case fairly fully. A contemporary writer ('Vandriver' in *Baily*) thus described the incident :

'The history of Catch 'em Alive is a curious one, and deserving of being placed on record. At Bath Races, in 1862, William Day sent up from Woodyates a batch of horses in order to get rid of them, and amongst them was a rather clever Flatcatcher colt, which took the eye of that capital judge of horseflesh, the late Sir William Codrington, who proposed to Mr. Sturt they should buy him between them, to which Mr. Sturt at once assented, and the animal went back to Woodyates in their joint names. He did nothing that year but came out the following season at Salisbury, where he ran nowhere, and then retired into private life until the Houghton Meeting at Newmarket, where he beat Lord Westmorland's Merry Heart by a head for the Cambridgeshire, and twenty-nine others, of which Mr. Ten Broeck's Summerside was third, beaten only by a similar distance to that which separated Merry Heart from Catch 'em Alive. On returning to scale a scene of unparalleled confusion and excitement arose in the weighing-house, such as has never before been witnessed in the annals of Newmarket, and which taxes our efforts to describe adequately.

'Fortunately, however, for our purpose, the official Hunsard of the Turf has placed on record the particulars of the transaction, from whence we gather them. It seems that on Catch 'em Alive returning to the weighing-room, Sammy Adams, his jockey, could not draw the proper weight, to the

great horror of his owners, who stood an enormous stake of money on him, and also of William Day, who was on the point of having all his hopes nipped in the bud. A whip was then brought in, which was stated to be the same he had used in the race ; this barely made him weight, and Lord Westmorland naturally objected to the jockey being weighed with anything given to him after he had got into the scales. At this moment the scene was tremendously exciting, for there was Sir William Codrington and his trainer, equally confident of their jockey having weighed out all right, and Lord Westmorland whose fortunes would have been completely revolutionised if he sustained his objection. Then Mr. Manning, than whom we will undertake to say no one understands his business better, and who has weighed more jockeys than any man alive, for the first time in his career could not make up his mind what course to adopt. Mr. Charles Weatherby looked serious, and the face of Mr. Clark was becoming his position. Outside the weighing-house the scene was scarcely less animated, for the ring was deeply interested in the dispute, as the success of Merry Heart, who was not mentioned in the betting, would have made a great difference in their balances ; and they besieged the room, giving expression to their hopes and fears, as the state of their books warranted.

‘ In the meantime Mr. Manning felt it his duty to call in the presence of the Stewards of the Jockey Club, and Admiral Rous, Lord Coventry, and Mr. Alexander accordingly entered the weighing-room together, like the bench of Judges when called upon to assist the House of Lords in some legal discussion. The first objection that was made to them, which was that a jockey not having brought his whip to scale could not afterwards weigh with it, they declared to be valid ; and the jockey of Merry Heart “ having passed the Doctor,” to use a medical phrase, the Stewards were on the point of awarding the race to that horse, when Summerside was weighed and declared to be also short of weight. This was too much for Mr. Manning’s equilibrium, and he accordingly requested the scales should be examined, when, horrible to relate, it was discovered that some lead had been affixed

to the bottom of the weight scale. When this was removed, and the scales adjusted, the Stewards felt satisfied that Adams would have drawn his proper weight if the scales had been adjusted before he was weighed, and being confirmed in that expression by Mr. Manning, Catch 'em Alive was pronounced the winner of the Cambridgeshire.

'It is far beyond our powers to describe the sensation of horror which arose at Newmarket when the news that the scales had been tampered with had transpired, and it was fortunate that they were rectified so quickly, or Consols might have been affected, for it was like tampering with the fountain of justice at its very centre point. Fortunately the Stewards were equal to the occasion, and on a drum-head court martial being summoned, they offered a reward of fifty pounds for the discovery of the delinquent, which did not lead to his apprehension. And if detected it is horrible to conjecture what his fate would have been, for none of the law reformers had included his crime in their digests ; and the very least punishment it was said would have been awarded to him was Death without benefit of clergy.'

At Thirsk in 1925 the Clerk of the Scales (Mr. J. Atkinson), who combines the eyes of Argus with the politeness of a courtier, noticed a small strip of lead on the ground under the scale chair. He immediately requested the jockey, who sat therein and was about to be weighed, to get off the seat, and had it taken off the beam and upended. The balance had not been quite correct before racing and to rectify matters a small piece of lead had, by his instructions, been fastened to the bottom of the chair. Those coming into the weighing-room during the re-adjustment and re-testing wondered for a moment if another Turf sensation was in the making. As a matter of fact there was no sensation and very little delay. Incidentally, I believe the Thirsk scales came from the long defunct Rotherham meeting, and that those in use at Sedgefield came from the extinct Durham fixture.

In alluding to the 'temporary retirement from the active business of racing of Mr. Thomas Hughes of Epsom' the late Mr. W. H. Langley spoke of that gentleman's so-called

‘yearlings,’ whose ages took a very extensive range, and amongst other venerable crocks included Romeo, The Brewer, Flash in the Pan, etc. Mr. Langley recalled a particular race in which Mr. Hughes had an entry. There were only two starters, Mr. Mytton’s Moor, ridden by J. Sharp, cantering through the running gap, which prevented him from going to the post. The betting was 6 to 5 against Moor and 2 to 1 against Euphony, who came in second. The Clerk of the Scales reported the owner of Trinket (Mr. T. Hughes) for ‘obstructing him in the execution of his duty and endeavouring to prevent Crouch (who rode Trinket) from weighing after the race,’ which caused a stunning sensation at the time, especially after an interested ‘party’ rode up on his pony, seized the saddle cloths of the winner and galloped off with them in the direction of Cambridge.

Not a few stories are told regarding jockeys weighing out with leaded whips, changing them with a confederate, and again being handed the heavier whip as they returned to weigh in. Doubtless many of these yarns are pure fiction—like so many others the burden of which is malpractice and villainy on the Turf. Nevertheless Clerks of the Scales were undoubtedly occasionally deceived, and there was at one time a certain amount of legerdemain. Not, however, till July 1865 was the rule passed by the Jockey Club that ‘no whip or substitute for a whip should be allowed in the scales.’

Nine years before this there was a good deal of whispering and head-shaking at Epsom regarding Ellington’s 1856 Derby. The late Col. R. F. Meysey-Thompson referred to this in his book *The Camp, The Course, and The Chase* (p. 4) thus :

‘Ellington took the longest time to win that race (the Derby) that any horse has ever required ; and mayhap, if all the stories that floated about were true, he was more than lucky in winning it. If the present regulations of racing had then been in force, no Derby would have gone that year to Swinton, for when the jockey took his seat in the scales, he carried in his hand a whip weighing 7 lb., with which he averred he had been riding, and it was only by the help of that whip that he could draw his weight correctly. That a

change of whips had been effected was, of course, very broadly hinted afterwards. In the autumn of that year Admiral Harcourt in my presence related to my father how he had called on his friend Lord Abingdon, on his return from the Derby, and after some little conversation exclaimed—

“ ‘ I have just won the Derby ! Are you not going to congratulate me ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Oh ! is it a subject of congratulation ? ’ ” replied Lord Abingdon, “ then I do so heartily ! ” ”

Now, last year I had occasion to quote the Ellington-Aldcroft whip incident in the *Sporting Chronicle* and this drew a contradiction from ‘ Mankato,’ not always a very kindly critic of anyone who dares to put pen to paper regarding Turf matters. He ridiculed the whole story, and I wrote to my friend Col. Meysey-Thompson for the authority on which he published the story quoted regarding the alleged 1856 Derby scandal. His reply is interesting in itself as well as very germane to the present notes on the duties and difficulties of Clerks of the Scales. Here is his letter, dated the 16th January 1926 :

‘ WESTWOOD MOUNT,  
SCARBOROUGH.

DEAR FAIRFAX-BLAKEBOROUGH,

In reply to your enquiry about Ellington, there was no authority needed for the statement about the whip being weighed in the scales with Aldcroft, for in our part of Yorkshire it was a common matter of conversation at the time and I heard it referred to so often in the next few years by various people such as Sir Charles Slingsby, Mr. H. S. Thompson, of Moorlands, and his son Mr. G. S. Thompson, Col. Thompson of Kirk Hammerton, besides farmers, grooms, etc., that I am sure nobody ever doubted there was a foundation of truth in the report. There was no cheap Press then and such subjects did not easily get into print, and this would certainly have been vigorously suppressed. I presume ‘ Mankato ’ did not reside in Yorkshire at the time, in the neighbourhood of Middleham, or Hambleton, or he must have known of the story being circulated. Mrs. Danby Harcourt was my godmother and I used to stay at Swinton, but though I heard the stablemen make jokes about it I expect it was kept from the ears of her and Admiral Harcourt. At any rate it was often referred to as ‘ a good joke ’ and as illustrating the

necessity of being 'as sharp as your neighbour.' Many were still living who could have challenged the statement made when *The Camp, The Course, and the Chase* was published twenty-eight years ago.

Johnny Osborne, for instance, Tom Cannon, and others I knew so well—but no one has ever done so till now. Moreover I submitted that chapter to George S. Thompson before it was printed and he never questioned the story of the whip, which I know he fully believed in. I feel sure the whip once produced at Hambleton for our inspection by some jockeys, when Sir Charles Slingsby and I were snowed up there many years ago, was that carried by Aldcroft.<sup>1</sup>

On the same occasion Col. Meysey-Thompson was shown a piece of metal shaped to go into a fob-pocket and easily concealed in the palm of the hand, which was taken from jockeys after they had weighed out and handed back when they were dismounting preparatory to weighing-in after the race.

In 1867 there was another weighing-room scandal, this time at Doncaster. The result was that Blue Gown was disqualified for the Champagne Stakes, for which he carried 6½ lb. overweight. John Doyle, the jockey, was representing James Watson, the Richmond trainer, at the meeting and must have been 'in the know,' for he urged one or two friends to back Virtue, trained by Watson, and after the race followed Wells into the weighing-room, and seeing Wells 'toeing the ground,' called out to Mr. Manning 'put in the 2 lb., please!' to the obvious discomfort of Wells. On noting the result, Mr. Manning sent for Admiral Rous and pointed out to 'the Dictator' that the jockey drew the overweight and more. 'Keep your feet off the ground and sit well back on the scale!' ordered the Admiral, who then examined the weights and at once pronounced sentence—'Disqualified!' to the chagrin of those who had quite cheerfully laid odds on

<sup>1</sup> Writing in 1907, the late John Corlett, who was always accurate in his statements, said of John Jackson: 'It was said that he had half the northern jockeys in his pocket, and he is generally credited with having supplied Aldcroft with a loaded whip to weigh in with when Ellington won the Derby. This was probably a malicious invention, as no evidence was ever forthcoming of it. It was, however, commonly reported that Ellington in reality carried many less pounds than his proper weight.'

Blue Gown. How nobly Sir Joseph Hawley behaved on that occasion has already been written in Turf history. Mr. George Holmes' Virtue (ridden by Jim Snowden) got the race. It transpired that by 'toeing the ground' Wells was able to go on riding overweight on two or three of Sir Joseph's horses, which were so good they could carry it. A quarrel between Doyle and Wells resulted in the *exposé*, the former knowing that Sir Joseph's jockey could not 'do' some of the weights he had to ride and trusted to deceive the Clerk of the Scales.

At Goodwood in 1870 the Ham Stakes was run in a deluge of rain, with the result that the jockeys weighed at least a couple of pounds heavier when they returned to scale than when they had sat in the chair a few minutes before. The Stewards considered at first whether the race should be declared void and Mr. Charles Weatherby was consulted. He had to confess that such a case had never occurred within his knowledge, so that he could quote no precedent. Eventually the Stewards decided they could not upset the Judge's decision because of an act of God, and so the extra weight was allowed to pass. Mr. H. Chaplin's The Pearl, ridden by Jeffery, was the winner, with Jim Snowden second on Mr. Merry's b. c. by Stockwell. There is a note appended to the *Calendar* report of the race :

'On returning to scale the three jockeys were found to be 2 lbs. overweight, but the Stewards declared the race valid as the jockeys weighed out correctly and the difference had been caused by the rain.'

There was a somewhat similar incident at the Pontefract July Meeting in 1926. A very heavy thunderstorm passed over the course during the Kilnwick Handicap. The riders of the three placed horses all returned overweight, but the Stewards allowed them to pass the scale.

It was otherwise at Manchester in 1881, when Sir J. D. Astley was convinced he had been the victim of foul play, and when Cairngorm as the result got a race which should have gone to Sir John's Costa. His victory was the result of a fluke. 'The Mate's' Costa won the race, but Wood couldn't draw the weight. Here is Sir John's own account

of the second misfortune he had at what was to him a disastrous Manchester meeting :

‘ I had bought two useful selling platers to get my money back in case Peter didn’t, and the very next race after the Cup I started Costa in a selling race and backed him freely. He won cleverly ; but as I was talking to some one I did not go to see the horse ([sic] jockey) weigh in, when suddenly up ran somebody and told me Wood could not draw the weight. I scuttled into the weighing-room and whilst the horse’s bridle was being taken off I told the Clerk of the Scales to put in 4 lb ; as that hardly turned the scale, of course the bridle was useless and Costa was disqualified, thereupon my losses were considerably increased instead of lightened. A 4 lb. cloth must have been abstracted by some interested individual ; for it is any odds that Wood weighed out right.’

That was how Cairngorm got the Manchester race. For Mr. Devereux in ’82 he won the second race on the new race-course at Gosforth Park, his last race being at Manchester that year. I heard the full story of Cairngorm from the octogenarian veteran, Mr. Thomas Devereux of Stockton-on-Tees, who owned him at the time of which I speak. Cairngorm was out of Emerald by Strathconan—the latter a grey horse with a savage temper, who ran in both the Derby and St. Leger of 1866. Strathconan was trained at Richmond, and the late Mr. ‘ Teddy ’ Roper tells us in his ‘ Memories ’ that he once saw him throw his jockey on Richmond Moor. He adds : ‘ Every creature—animal and horseman—got off that moor quicker than anything I ever saw and Strathconan was left in sole possession. He was captured in about an hour, and did no harm, but it was a fine sight to see him galloping about seeking whom he might devour.’

I have record of only one lady having acted as Clerk of the Scales. This single instance was, according to the *Sporting Magazine* of 1831, at Blandford Races. An old-time writer was more amused and surprised than shocked, as witness his remarks regarding the feminine race official :

‘ I could not help thinking it rather *outré* to see a fair lady weighing the jockeys, and when they came to change their jacket or put on a flannel sweater or two to make them preponderate in the scale, to see them standing as cool as



cucumbers before the fair damsel, or, at least, full in her view, with doeskins all unbuttoned. I deemed it a pretty particular considerable tarnation queer sight, I guess, but *prenez garde ! prenez garde !* I must hold hard.'

The lady, who stood 'as cool as a cucumber,' succeeded her deceased father and brother, each of whom had at one time been Clerk of the Scales.

The races which give the Clerks of Scales most trouble, speaking in a general way, are those for amateur riders. Even though they have the whole afternoon to prepare, either the colours, the saddle, or their horse, or weight-cloths are missing at the last moment. Some of them do not attempt 'to try themselves' on the scale provided in most jockeys' dressing-rooms to enable those who are to ride to present themselves at scale *somewhere* near the weight they are to carry, so that much time is wasted this way. Others have not grasped, or cannot understand, the penalties or allowances, so hold up a queue of waiting brother amateur 'bumpers' whilst they recite their own and their horse's previous turf exploits to arrive at a final decision as to what their horse's impost will be, thus causing further delay. This always seems to have been the case with gentlemen riders, and the position must have been even more trying for the scales' official when he had to listen to arguments as to whether certain riders were qualified to ride as 'gentlemen.' Of course a good many amateur riders are so frequently 'going round' that they are as much *au fait* with the rules and regulations of the Turf game and the customs of the weighing-room as any professional, so give the official who presides there no trouble whatever. At the small country meetings this is not the case, and allowances have to be made so as not to add to the very evident anxiety and bewilderment of those who are to ride. Be it said that most Clerks of the Scales are very tolerant with these rural enthusiasts who perhaps only have one ride in public a year. It would be unfortunate were it otherwise, for they are the very type to be encouraged—men who really love horses and sport, men who understand both better than the rules which govern the Turf. Nevertheless one sometimes wonders how the man

at the scales succeeds in maintaining the kindly restraint and good temper of a Sunday School teacher amid all the delays and irritations which beset him.

The Irish jockeys are the most considerate to the official in the weighing-room. As soon as they arrive they make it their duty to go straight to him, and giving their names, report what they are going to ride. It would be of immense assistance if this were more general among English jockeys, as the Clerk of the Scales could then have his book made up with all 'the probables,' the jockeys and any inaccuracies on the card pointed out to him before 'the rush' commenced. In addition this makes it possible for the men at the number board to have the names of jockeys who have not previously ridden at the meeting, painted, and possible delays thereby avoided.

Sufficient has been said to show that though the Clerk of the Scales is not in the limelight and enters but little into the calculations and imaginations of the vast racing public, he has, notwithstanding, a very important part and place in the machinery of the Turf.

At York Spring fixture 1927 (after this chapter was written), the executive at that meeting substituted two automatic scales of the platform type (one in the jockeys' dressing-room and one in the weighing-room proper) for the old chair and beam. In 1923 this system was introduced, but as it was then an infringement of Rule 33, the automatic machine had to be discontinued. This Rule has now been amended, the Stewards of the Jockey Club having given their approval and sanction to the new method, the chief virtue of which is claimed to be the saving of time rather than accuracy. I had just watched the innovation in progress at York when Mr. J. Atkinson, who has such a long and extensive experience as Clerk of the Scales, arrived on a similar errand. We met in the paddock later and I asked him his opinion of the new method. His reply was 'Of course it makes it much easier for the responsible official, as each jockey checks his weight before he comes to the scale, and brings a slip with the weight and number of the horse he is riding with him to pass. It isn't the old scales, however,

which are the cause of delays. It is when there are big fields and many of the jockeys are riding in races following each other. Some of them have to weigh out and most of them have to change into fresh colours. That's what causes delays at the scale and consequent delay in getting the numbers up in the frame.' In any case, the present cost of the automatic scales will probably make the Jockey Club chary of insisting upon their use being general and imperative. They must be looked upon for the time being as a luxury for big meetings rather than an essential for the smaller ones.

## CHAPTER IX

### STARTERS AND STARTING

It has already been mentioned that there are Turf officials living who have acted as Clerk of the Scales and Judge at the same meeting. Less than a century ago it was quite usual for the Clerk of the Course to act as Starter, or for some local gentleman to officiate in that capacity. It was found as fields increased in size and racing developed that to hold a dual office, or for amateurs to act as officials, did not work satisfactorily. They had on the one hand sufficient to do to concentrate on *one* set of duties, whilst on the other the untrained, inexperienced amateur occasioned delays, was unable to enforce the necessary discipline at the post, or to secure the confidence of jockeys, owners, trainers, or the public either there or when in the Judge's box. In 1839 the *Sporting Magazine* writer on the duties of Turf officials (who has previously been quoted), offered some peculiar views on starts and Starters. After remarking that 'The Clerk of Races was often called upon to start the horses,' and that 'the office is one of considerable importance, especially in short contests,' he adds :

'With a little practice and attention it is easily accomplished. *If properly managed jockeys will start themselves. The only thing requisite on the part of the starter is to prevent any from obtaining a great advantage over others.* When he sees they are all prepared and well together, he has nothing more to do than ask "Are you all ready?"—which is intended as a note of final preparation, and seeing that they are, to give the word "Off!" It will seldom be necessary to call them back. If, however, he perceives at the last moment that any

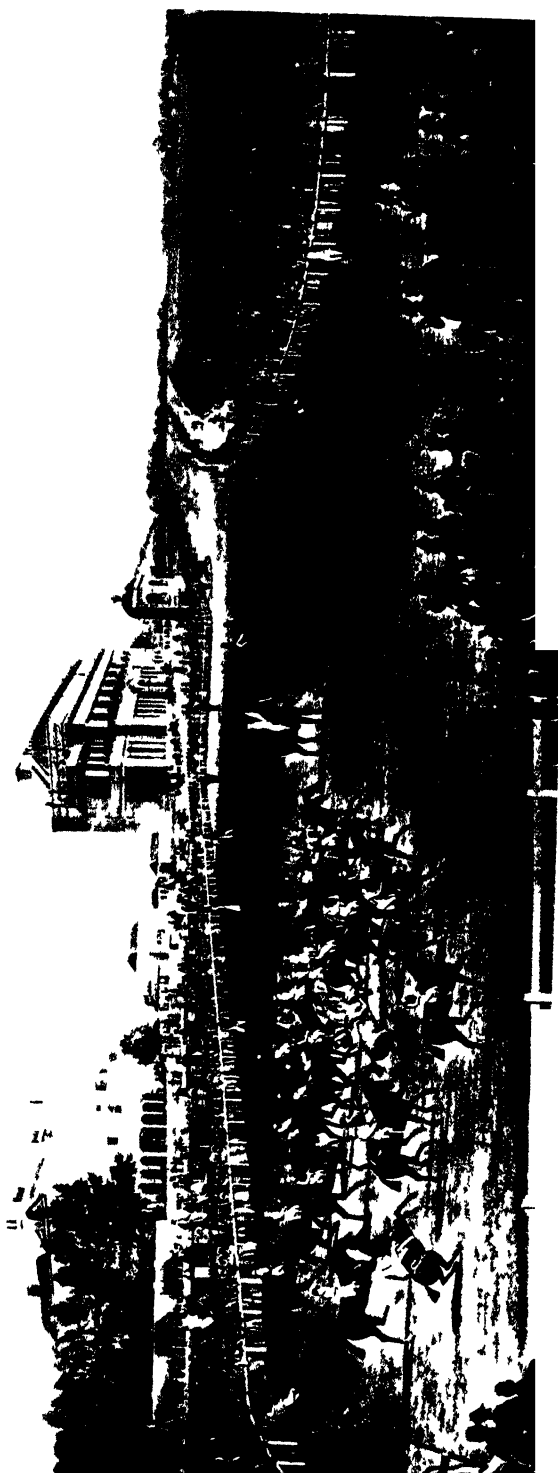
are in an unfavourable position, he should not exclaim "Off!"—it is that order being given too hastily which causes so much confusion. A man stationed at a little distance up the course with a flag—the Starter having a similar one which he drops when he determines the Start to be fair—is an admirable plan and ought to be universally adopted. The person having care of the flag in advance must keep his eye on the Starter, and the moment the latter drops his flag, the other does the same. For such races as heats are run, it is necessary to have a man in the distance chair, who drops a flag the instant the judge lowers his, and has to observe what horses, if any, have not passed the post.'

Those who lived in the days when the foregoing suggestions were made, and the 'go' and 'stay' system was in force, had no conception of starting gates and modern ideas and ideals. In 1682 starting was entirely by word of mouth, as witness the following interesting extract related by Lord Conway in April of that year (as quoted by Mr. Siltzer in his recent book, *Newmarket*, p. 138) :

'Here happnd yesterday a dispute upon the greatest point of critticall learning that was ever known at New-Markett. A match between a Horse of Sir Rob: Carr's, and a gelding of Sir Rob: Geeres, for a mile and a halfe only, had engaged all the court in many thousand pownds much depending in so short a course to have them start fairly. Mr. Griffin was appointed to start them.

'When we saw them equall he sayd "Goe," and presently he cryed out "Stay"; one went off, and run through the course and claimes his money, the other never stird at all. Now possibly you may say that this was not a fayre starting, but the criticks say, after the word "Goe" was out of his mouth, his commission was determined, and it was illegal for him to say "Stay." I suppose there will be volumes written upon this subject, 'tis all referred to his Majty's Judgement, who hath not yet determined it.'

At many country fixtures the courses were so narrow that the horses had to be started in rows. This, of course, resulted in much jealousy, vituperation, delay, and confusion at the post, and added tremendously to the difficulties of the official



THE START



with the flag, especially if he didn't know the individual character and temperament of both the jockeys and the horses which came under his orders.

Apropos of horses being started in two (or even more) rows, one behind the other, I heard a good deal from the late Mr. John Hutton, who in 1869—the year after he had attained his majority—was appointed, with Capt. Coates of Pasture House, to act as Steward at the Northallerton Race Meeting, of which his father had long been an interested and generous supporter. Mr. Hutton told me that Capt. Coates knew little about the rules and regulations of the Turf, whilst *he* knew nothing at all. If ever he had been likely to develop into a racing man, the Northallerton fixture of the year mentioned cured him. Before racing started, Mr. McGeorge, the Starter, button-holed him and said : ‘ I have more trouble at Northallerton meeting with jockeys than any other, and I want you to come down to the post with me to support me.’ So Mr. Hutton accompanied the Starter, meekly and humbly as a young man who found himself in the position he neither relished very much nor felt very capable of filling to his own satisfaction. There were about fifteen runners for the first event, and Mr. McGeorge addressed the jockeys, after getting them into two rows one behind the other, something after the manner following :

‘ Now look here, you jockeys, we are going to have no nonsense at this meeting like we have had in the past. This gentleman is a Steward, and he will be a witness of any disobedience of orders or hanky-panky monkey tricks. We've had too much of that sort of thing at Northallerton, and you'll go when I start you and come back if I call you, or you'll be suspended and your licence cancelled.’

There was a good deal more in a similar strain, and at last the Starter apparently let them go. They were no sooner ‘ off,’ however, than he called them back, got them into two lines and gave them another lecture much after the style of the first, and then let them go again. ‘ Surely,’ said Mr. Hutton, ‘ the first start was better than the second ? ’ ‘ Oh ! that's all right,’ said the official with the flag, ‘ I am given to understand that there are only three horses out of the whole bunch



which are trying, and they've decided to divide the stakes !' This was an eye-opener to a young Steward who heard still more during the day of arrangements between northern trainers to divide 'the winter's keep.' There were seven races on the card, and there were either objections or enquiries into the running of five of them. Capt. Coates and Mr. Hutton sat sweating blood all the afternoon, endeavouring to sift the contradictory evidence brought before them—how some horses had been 'hemmed in and couldn't come through,' how others had been handicapped by 'bumping and boring,' and so on. He was so disgusted with the inner mysteries and subtleties of racing that he, erroneously imagining all meetings to be on a par with Northallerton, determined to have no further connection with the Turf and declined to have any more to do with his (now defunct) home meeting.

In Ireland they made no bones about their courses not being wide enough to allow the runners (when there were more than five or six) being started in line. Seventy years ago there were many curious conditions connected with Irish racing. For instance, 'Winners of prizes exceeding £50 shall pay £4, all others £2, for scales, straw, and Judge, and when the race is in heats, half-a-sovereign to the distance men.' Racing at this time was very much a homely affair, and indeed the pity is that it has become so commercialised since. There was much that was primitive at many of the country meetings in Ireland even twenty years ago, and everyone took it in good part and enjoyed the sporting atmosphere of it all. At Elphin, for instance, they had a mixed Flat and Steeplechase meeting with a Plate of '100 sovs. clear' (quite a 'big race' in those days). On the second day six horses started for a sweepstake of two sovs. each with thirty added, two heats of 'about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles.' Lord De Freyne's O'Connel came in first, winning in a canter, Mr. D. Irwin's Curate second, and Mr. Kelly's Sparks third. 'It appeared by an investigation, on an objection being made by the rider of Mr. M'Cormack's Cassandra, that those three ran the wrong side of a stone which was used to mark the course as a post ; and Will Scarlet (Lord De Freyne's) having fallen and Diana being distanced, the race was given to

Cassandra, being the only one who went right over the course.'

There was a curious condition attached in 1862 to the Silver Cup at Wicklow Races. It was for 'horses the property of voters in the County Wicklow,' such voters and gentlemen riders being allowed 5 lb.

The County Louth Steeplechases (over the Mullacurry course) in October of the same year (1862) had curious conditions for their opening race—The Great Northern Hunt Race of £70 added to a sweepstake of 5 sovs. each, 2½ miles ; the winner to give half-dozen of champagne to the riders in the race and pay 7 sovs. to the fund. There were five runners, and that astute Turfite, Capt. Machell, who had been racing a good deal in Ireland that year, won the event with Sir Bobby, ridden by Mr. D. Canny.

At the Curragh September meeting the winner of the Anglesey Stakes was called upon each year to give three dozen of champagne to the club on the day of the race. The boot used to be on the other leg at Catterick in Yorkshire, where a pipe of port (126 gallons) was the prize for one race, which pipe of black-strap went to the owner.

Confusing indeed must the result of a steeplechase at Athy (Bray) have been to the spectators in 1858. There were only four runners and the race was run in three heats of a mile each. The official return reads, 'Don Pedro's jockey fell in the second heat and came in without a rider ; he was allowed to start for the third heat by mistake, and came in first, but the race was given to Irishman, who came in first in the first heat, but running the wrong side of the winning post, lost the heat ; he, however, turned back and saved his distance.'

But to our more immediate point. The following conditions for a race at the Howth and Baldoyle meeting a week or two later strikes one as curious these days : 'The horses to be started in two rows, thirty yards apart. First row horses that have never started for any race ridden by professional jockeys. All other horses to be in the second row.' Capt. Bellew's Surprise, ridden by Mr. W. Kennedy, won both heats.

Apropos of amateurs acting as starters there was a very

considerable row at Liverpool in 1841 following upon a very unusual incident in connection with the Mersey Stakes, to which a contemporary writer thus referred :

‘ On several jockeys arriving at the scale to weigh, they one and all broke out into invectives against the start, and declared that Lord George Bentinck, who conducted the starting of each race, had permitted his own horse, Misdeal (the winner), to gain an advantage of fifty yards over every other horse. Mr. Osborne, the owner of the Gipsy Queen, protested against the race, and Lord George Bentinck resigned his stewardship and submitted the case to the other Stewards, the Earl of Sefton, Sir William Bulkeley, and the Earl of Eglinton, who decided the start to be a fair one.’

Lord George Bentinck, by the way, was most active in securing better starts, especially in connection with the St. Leger, with which race they had become a scandal. He was, however, considered blameworthy in acting as Starter in a race in which he had a runner. To vindicate himself Lord George had Misdeal started in the Stanley Stakes on the concluding day of the meeting, and in the ring stated that in order to convince the public that Misdeal could under no circumstances have been beaten for the Mersey Stakes, he had given Howlett instructions to ‘ start full two lengths behind the last horse in the Stanley Stakes.’ Misdeal was first and Gipsy Queen again second—2 to 1 on the winner.

The following week at Cheltenham (then known as the County of Gloucestershire Meeting) there was another *contretemps* on the second day. Owing to the rain and fog several jockeys refused to ride, and in one event Chapple was winning in a canter but mistook the grand stand for the Judge’s box and pulled up, thus enabling Sam Rogers to win the race. As a result of this the Stewards postponed the remaining events till the following day.

Harking back, however, despite Lord George Bentinck’s thoughtless action in acting as Starter for a race in which he was personally interested, there is no doubt that he was responsible in no small degree for a considerable reform and improvement in connection with starting and also in the discipline and conduct of jockeys when assembled at ‘ the

post.' John Kent, his old trainer and biographer, refers to Lord George's stringent code of laws promulgated in 1844, which purged the race-courses of defaulters, established punctuality in starting for each race by fining the Clerk of the Course 10s. for every minute behind time, and insisted that each horse should be numbered on the card, a corresponding number being exhibited in the telegraph frame. I fancy it was Lord George who made starting by flags compulsory, though he did not actually introduce the system, but rather ratified it and enforced it. John Kent remarks :

' His first attempt to start horses by a flag was with one flag upon a very long pole, with which he marshalled the horses to the post, walking a little way in front of them and soundly rating any jockey who attempted to advance beyond the line prescribed by the Starter. The objection to the one flag system was soon shown, as the jockeys watched its gradual lowering and tried to jump off before it had actually fallen. His lordship then instituted the advance flag. . . . The starting was generally performed by the Clerk of the Course, or some other official quite unused to the work, and the jockeys took every advantage of him. Jockeys then, as now, would use every device in their power to obtain an advantageous start, and to this end some would deliberately cause false starts until they attained their object. Sometimes a favourite would be kept at the starting post nearly an hour in a state of frenzy until he was more than half exhausted before the flag fell. As the horses were started by word of command—the single word ' Go ' being their *nunc dimittis*—the jockeys were often unable to understand what the starter meant, and sometimes ran the race right through when there was no start. The person deputed to start the horses at Goodwood in 1830 had an impediment in his speech, and when he became excited it was with great difficulty that he could articulate a word. For the Duke of Richmond's Plate that year there were a number of false starts, which delayed the actual start for a very long time. After the race William Arnall, the oldest jockey who took part in it, and one upon whose word full reliance could be placed, was summoned by the Stewards to explain the cause of the long delay. He

So far as I know this is the only occasion of an English Turf official ever even having occasioned a breath of suspicion against the manner in which he fulfilled his duties in connection with racing. It has always been claimed, and rightly claimed, that English Handicappers, Judges, Starters, Clerks of Scales, and Stewards have been no respecter of persons from Royalty downwards, there has never been any suggestion of bribery and corruption with any of them. True, one almost daily hears privileged persons jocularly ask the Handicapper, Judge, and Starter to be prejudiced in their favour, and one occasionally hears idle stories as to favouritism. It has been shown, however, that in early days there was not unfrequently a jockey ring which made a dead set at a certain animal at the post and thus added to the difficulties which beset the official appointed to set them off on the journey so that no one horse had the advantage of another.

Another famous St. Leger start *contretemps* was in Antonio's year (1819). The Stewards ordered the Doncaster classic to be re-run. But let me quote the official record, which is particularly interesting in view of the statement that 'the person appointed by the Stewards' had both to start and judge the St. Leger horses in addition to being Clerk of the Course. Now for the Racing bible's story :

'In consequence of a representation to the Stewards that several horses prepared for starting had not got off with the rest, the above was in the first instance declared a false start, and a fresh race was run, but the whole question was subsequently referred to the Stewards of the Jockey Club, whose decision will be found below.

NEWMARKET, *Tuesday, October 5th, 1819.*

The Stewards of the Jockey Club having taken into consideration the case laid before them by the Stewards of Doncaster races, respecting the St. Leger Stakes, and having examined Mr. Lockwood, the person appointed by the Stewards at Doncaster to start and judge the race, are decidedly of opinion that the race should have been adjudged to Antonio, and consequently the Stewards should not have allowed a second race.

Signed by Order of the Stewards of the Jockey Club,

EDWARD WEATHERBY.'

There were strong representations made to the Jockey Club after this that a rule should be passed 'forbidding more than one start for a race.'

Writing in November 1819, with particular reference to the frequent false starts for the St. Leger and the fiasco in that year, a Tickhill correspondent, signing himself 'The Cocked Hat,' threw out the following suggestions as to how starts might be improved :

'I am afraid the recommendation of dropping a small flag at the start would be attended with great danger, for, from the well-known spirit of the horses, they would be apt to shy or plunge aside by anything waving or dropping suddenly near them ; nor can they, in my opinion, be brought in line like cavalry.

'I also think any person would have found great difficulty at the last Doncaster Meeting, in bringing Mr. Jaques's colt, Thunderbolt, to the place drawn for him : this restiveness in blood horses we see every year, therefore I cannot approve of the idea of drawing for places.

'If any improvement could be made in the manner of starting (for the furtherance of which I have sent the method now in use) it would be rendering a great service to those gentlemen who have large sums pending on their horses, as well as to betters in general. I believe the way of starting the St. Leger race for some years has been for the Clerk of the Course, when horses are on the right side of the post, to ask if all is ready ; which being answered in the affirmative (though perhaps not by all the jockeys) and he seeing them nearly in a line, gives the word "Go" ; if they start without any orders then a bugle sounds sufficiently loud enough for any rider to hear, if he is not willingly deaf. I have heard the call back several times, a considerable distance from the starting post.

'Doncaster race-course is generally allowed to be superior to most in the kingdom, yet as there were such disputes about the start for the last St. Leger, the corporation have, with their usual liberality, come forward, and determined to improve and considerably widen that part of the course ; as also to make new and beautiful starting places at the Red House and for the two-year-olds.'

That the opinions as to what was a good start in 1840 and the views held to-day on the same subject are vastly different is illustrated by the following official description of the first Stewards' Cup race :

' Lord March's Guava, Lord Exeter's Hellespont and the Duke of Beaufort's Perdita went to the post with the rest, but did not get off—it was declared a good start.'

For the same event in 1864 (won by Marigold) :

' The Starter reported that the horse was thirty minutes late at the post, and one hour and ten minutes were lost through the disobedience of the jockeys—Deacon, Maidment, Tomlinson, Morgan and Thomas—and the fractiousness of Man-at-Arms, Alchymist and Blue Mantle. The Stewards suspended the jockeys mentioned for "a day."'

Passing on to more recent times, listen to what *The Sportsman* had to say regarding starting in June 1871 :

' But for the fact that suburban race meetings have little favour in the eyes of the Jockey Club, it would be impossible that the disgraceful scenes that took place at Croydon on Friday should be passed over without the principal offenders being punished. For one race there was a delay at the post of an hour ; for another three-quarters of an hour ; while for a third, after waiting till nearly eight o'clock without being able to get the jockeys under control, the Starter threw down his flag and returned to the weighing-enclosure, and the race was declared void. The Croydon Committee, it will be observed, will, by the unruliness of the jockeys, profit to the extent of £20, apart from the weighing-fees. Mr. Marcus Verrall has been a good deal abused for the part he took in this matter, but as I can bear testimony to the provocation Starters not unfrequently meet with at this class of meeting, I think that he did what was quite right. I recollect Mr. Marshall doing the same thing at Bromley, after cutting a long time to waste in endeavouring to get off a number of jockeys who did not mean to start. At Newmarket we never see such disgraceful exhibitions, nor, in fact, do we at any respectable meeting. Under these circumstances, therefore, jockeys must have a licence at Croydon to take such

liberties, or they would fear the result too much to behave so insolently as they do. I recollect one instance in which a refractory jockey, being threatened with 'reporting,' on which would be attended suspension, remarked to the Starter, "Suspension be — ; I am not going to ride any more." And the Starter, at his wit's end, did not move further in the matter. The culprit ought to have been warned off the Turf. If the whole lot of the jockeys who rode in the scramble were to be suspended for six months we should have no reason to regret the fact ; and I think if Mr. Morgan were to report the case to the Jockey Club, one or two of the jockeys would have a fair chance of doing "walking exercise" for some time to come if they ventured on a race-course.'

Charles Davis, who was huntsman of the Royal Buckhounds, acted as Starter at Ascot and had to remind the jockeys in one race that he had started them some minutes ago. Each of the jockeys was waiting for someone to go first.

William Vane, who had for years been head lad for the Dilly's, was appointed Starter at Winchester, and after letting a big field go the straight mile beat them all on his hack. Presumably they were all riding a waiting race.

One of the most amusing races of this sort I ever saw was at the now defunct Blackpool meeting. There were only two runners for one steeplechase, and Tim Threlfell was riding one of them. It so happened that each jockey had orders to let the other horse give him a lead over the first jump and over the water. Obviously it was impossible for both jockeys to carry out their instructions, though be it said, they both *tried*. The Starter (I think it was Mr. Marsh) finding the horses did not budge when he gave them official orders to go, grew angry and threatened all sorts of fines, pains, and penalties. At last the two horses walked away from the post, then they trotted a bit, and the end of a ludicrous race was that both of them tumbled into the water.

In 1890 there was an historic starting fiasco in connection with the Cumberland Plate at Carlisle. The winner was Mr. J. B. Burton's Barmecide (by Barcaldine) ridden by Seth Chandley. Mr. Burton died at Brighton in 1925 and often



used to recall this memorable occasion when there were two races for the Cumberland Plate, the favourite, Mr. A. M. Singer's Tyrant (Calder), winning the first. This, however, was decided to be a false start, *The Calendar* stating :

'The Starter, when called upon by the Stewards, declared the first race to be no race, and added that the jockeys had started without his orders, and that he never dropped the flag. When asked by the Stewards, he replied that he had no complaint against the jockeys. The following day the Starter wished to report the jockeys for misconduct, but the Stewards, remembering his reply on the day before, did not feel justified in acting upon the complaint.'

In the actual race the betting was 11 to 8 against Tyrant and 3 to 1 Barmecide (second in the 'no race'). The latter won by four lengths with Tyrant nowhere. In 1893 Barmecide won the Goodwood Cup and secured the Eton Cup at Windsor on three occasions.

My old friend Mr. R. H. Harper, long with Mr. Geo. Menzies and with Mr. Geo. Gunter at Wetherby, and longer still a bold cross-country rider, followed another old friend of mine (Mr. Charles Long) as Starter at Wetherby and Sedgefield. It was at the former excellently conducted meeting that Bob had difficulty with a big field for a hurdle race on the very first day he officiated. At last he saw, or thought he saw, what was in the wind, and after some delay said : 'Now, if those of you who are trying will come up here into line I will get you off.' He did too ! *Experientia docet*, and few have had more experience than Mr. 'Bob' Harper.

One of the most patient men I have ever seen was the late Captain Ernest Willoughby (afterwards Lord Middleton). Some folk thought he was *too* patient and that he sometimes waited too long to get all the horses away on equal terms. As a matter of fact the Starter has not been, and never will be, born who will give satisfaction to everyone at all times, or even at all times satisfaction to himself. If he gets a perfect start he may have delayed the race long enough for the blower to upset some carefully arranged *coup*, and so he is out of favour with some just when he is congratulating himself on his accomplishment. Capt. Willoughby not only

had the confidence of the jockeys but also had the affection of many of them. To little boys just commencing to ride in public he was particularly kind, always watching their interests as does a judge those of a prisoner who is undefended. Many are the discussions he and I had regarding what may be termed the psychology of starting—the intuition to grasp the second when horses are not only all in line, but when the least experienced jockey has his mount in hand, gathered together, and ready to go. Time and time again did Capt. Willoughby express to me the impossibility of those watching operations through their glasses from a stand deciding which was, and which was not, a propitious moment for the horses to be despatched.

‘There are’ (he used to say) ‘a dozen little things they cannot possibly see six furlongs away, which it is a Starter’s *duty* to see and be influenced by—a boy who is fishing about with his foot for a lost stirrup-iron, a jockey who has dropped a rein, something wrong with a saddle, bridle, or blinkers which ought to be put right before the horses go, and so on.’

A Starter ought really to have ridden in races himself (as had Capt. Willoughby) to grasp fully the one specific moment at which jockeys and horses are all ready to go. That second comes all the more easily and naturally when the jockeys have absolute confidence in the official who is to send them on their journey. Failing that confidence, and that feeling that there is a sort of mesmeric sympathy between the line of horses, those on their backs, and the Starter, there are false starts, broken tapes, everyone at the post is on wires so to speak, and there is confusion, irritation, and dissatisfaction.

Many of us remember that when Capt. Willoughby retired on becoming Lord Middleton, Sir Archibald White (who very quickly handed in his licence) failed to turn up at the Whitsuntide meeting at Redcar. He had not seen in *The Calendar* that he was appointed to act, or there was some bungle somewhere. Anyhow, there was no Starter present, and the Stewards at last prevailed upon the late Capt. Nat Scott to step into the breach. Poor Scott didn’t like his job one little bit, but promised to do his best. Whether he was too conscientious, whether the jockeys took

advantage of the circumstances, or whether they 'didn't know where they had him,' and so became wild, I can't say, as I was judging at Hexham on the first day of the Redcar meeting. There were false starts and long delays on that first day, and when I went down to Redcar on the Tuesday I was asked to relieve Capt. Scott of the position, which he said 'had put years on him.' Seeing that the jockeys at the meeting had become as wild as hawks, unsettled, and unbalanced owing to one amateur and inefficient Starter, I saw no fun in taking hold under such conditions, nor did I see how the position would be improved seeing that I had never started a race in my life, my duties having always been at the other end of the course in the Judge's box. On the principle that they'd better stick to the devil they'd got than have another they didn't know (at any rate in that capacity), I declined to go to poor Nat Scott's relief, and he carried on, with at least one more false start and race run through which had to be re-run. That was a memorable Redcar meeting, the times of excursion trains and horse-box specials having to be altered owing to racing being nearly an hour late. I merely tell all this to show how essential confidence in the Starter is, and how that confidence can only be bestowed upon those possessing experience together with a sympathetic and intuitive knowledge of horses and riders.

Capt. Willoughby, who in 1902 succeeded the late Mr. Arthur Coventry as Starter to the Jockey Club, had these essentials, and when he retired in 1922 his kindness and consideration to the jockeys was marked by a presentation to him from them of a golden cigarette case, on which was inscribed the names of the leading jockeys with whom he had so frequently come into contact. I know how touched Lord Middleton (as he had become) was with this presentation. He told me it was to be an heirloom in his family.

Perhaps only those who knew him well realised that Capt. Willoughby was in his 76th year when he succeeded his brother, the tenth Baron, on 25th May 1922, and soon after ceased to act as Starter. He lived only a couple of years afterwards, dying suddenly at Birdsdall House, Malton, in November 1924. He, of course, began his official career

after the introduction of the much discussed and at first much maligned starting gate. Mr. Arthur Coventry (one of the best amateur riders on the flat we have ever had in this country), witnessed the inception of 'the gate' in this country, for he succeeded the late Lord Marcus Beresford as Jockey Club Starter in May 1890, and continued as such till August 1902, at which time the innovation had become compulsory for two and three-year-old races. He died on 22nd August 1925, at the age of 73, and lived to see most of the prejudice against the 'gate' die a natural death.

Of course a new generation has risen up—for the great Turf army is ever changing—and the probability is that, were there a serious suggestion that the machine, vastly improved in recent years, should be dispensed with, and the flag again take its place, there would be just the same outcry, as so many of us remember, when 'the gate' was first tried in England with a view to its adoption. The fact of the matter is that the English are a conservative race and do not welcome innovations with open arms. At any rate, despite all the frantic and frenzied opposition with which it was received, the starting machine is not only an accepted institution in flat racing but also now under National Hunt rules, so that after twenty-seven years' eating of the pudding we must take it the proof is established. The gate was introduced in 1900 and was made compulsory for all races in 1905.

The Starter who contributed the chapter on 'Starters and Starting' to the late Mr. A. E. T. Watson's *The Racing World and its Inhabitants* (1904) was wholly in favour of 'the gate,' though Mr. Watson was not. The former said :

'The more inexperienced boys have a better chance with a barrier. In the days of the flag a wily jockey would not go unless he was ready, and he never was ready till he thought he had a little bit the best of it. If one or two others were before him and he felt the start was imminent, he would call out, "No, no !" and swing round his horse. Some of the jockeys were at once so artful and so apparently innocent and anxious, that they reduced this business to quite a fine art, and boys really had no chance with them. The trick had long been fully recognised by the authorities, and in the

*Rules of Racing* it was expressly laid down that any jockey who was guilty of "wilfully turning his horse's head round" or of "hanging back" was to be reported to the Stewards; but, as I have said, they did it so cunningly that it was difficult to say when their action was intentional. Now, however, the runners are, all being well, in a line standing still, and the younger jockeys can get off on equal terms. . . . I doubt if any racing official is, on the whole, more unjustly criticised than the Starter. . . . Most of this criticism comes from men who are watching (what they can see of) his proceedings from the stand; and I have no hesitation in saying that they very rarely have the least idea of what has really happened. I have known several cases where experienced racing men who have been down near me, have been good enough to say that a start was excellent, while those who have looked on through their glasses three-quarters of a mile away have declared the same start "rotten."

At Pontefract in 1925 the miners were responsible for an unpleasant demonstration against Capt. Hubert Allison's efforts at the gate, and again in 1927 Mr. L. L. Firth had a similar experience at that meeting. One regretted that such unsporting action should be taken by Yorkshiremen, who know more of the behind-the-scenes difficulties of race officials than most folk. Capt. Allison was Capt. Willoughby's assistant at Newmarket for some years before he succeeded him. Of course jockeys, as well as the general public, sometimes have their own not very complimentary views regarding starts—occasionally both may be right—but the former are compelled to keep a still tongue unless there is an enquiry made by the Stewards into any particular start.

The Starter has considerable disciplinary powers, and perhaps none have used them more than the most conscientious and much liked Mr. L. L. Firth, an ex-amateur rider who starts at many northern meetings. Many were the 'fivers' he called upon jockeys to part with<sup>1</sup> till they found

<sup>1</sup>At Thirsk Summer meeting 1927 Mr. Firth fined both S. Wragg and P. Donoghue £5 for anticipating the start, and I heard him say in the weighing-room to Nevett, 'Now don't you get yourself fined! These fines are doing a lot of good and they are really for the benefit of all of you.'

that it paid them better to be well-behaved at the post. As a matter of fact jockeys to-day are, on the whole, a well-conducted lot of fellows. This is more than can be said for many of the horses they ride. Some of these are influenced by temper and temperament, others are not sufficiently practised with the gate at home, and so act the fool and make themselves nuisances to the Starter and to everyone else at the post. So long as thoroughbreds remain the bundle of nerves they are, so long will these conditions remain, though in many cases they might be improved at home.

The Starter has a special prerogative in such cases. The following extract from *The Calendar* of June 1923 regarding an individual case will serve to illustrate the attitude the Starter may adopt to vicious or habitually unruly animals :

‘The Stewards of the Jockey Club received a report from Capt. Allison, the official Starter, that in consequence of the unruly behaviour of Isle of Wight he proposed to exercise the power given in Instructions to Starters to ignore horses at the start. The Stewards, therefore, informed Sir H. Cunliffe-Owen, the owner of the horse, of the report, and also called before them Gray, who had ridden the horse at the Epsom and Newbury Summer meetings. Gray stated that, in his opinion, the horse was better behaved when not held at the post, and that he was held at Epsom and not at the start for the Empire Stakes at Newbury. The Stewards, while entirely agreeing with the Starter, that no consideration should be shown to unruly horses if this might prejudice the chance of other horses under his orders, again drew his attention to the importance that under no case must a horse be held close up to the tapes, but should be held behind the other horses, and at a stand.—Signed, Jersey, J. Reid Walker, and Samuel Scott (for Lord Hamilton of Dalzell).’

Sufficient has been said to show that starting is a science, though its professors best of anyone know how impossible it is to attempt to apply hard and fast rules to a system the conditions governing which not only vary in almost every race but often in a fraction of a second. In November 1925 Sir John Rutherford spoke at a meeting of the Jockey Club with regard to the tapes being broken at the start. He was

then advocating that on such occasions as this happened it should become a rule that it was 'no start.' He went on to say that they all knew that Starters were human and therefore not infallible. Lord Hamilton of Dalzell followed Sir John, and remarked : 'It is impossible to make the exact starting of races a science, and we are obliged to rely to a great extent on the initiative and the individuality of the Starter, so it is not advisable to restrict him more than we can help.'

It is those who know most about the duties of race officials who are least caustic in their criticisms—indeed least critical. Fools step in and froth where men of wide experience stand aside and say nothing. The fools, however, occasionally make matters very unpleasant for the Starter !

Early this year (1927) the French racing correspondent of *Horse and Hound* wrote the following interesting note regarding Starters and starting in France :

'Now that we are approaching the flat-racing season it is interesting to note that Colonel Feline, starter to the Société Sportive, has sent a circular to the trainers and jockeys, calling a meeting of the professions to hear a discourse from him on the question of the starts for the coming season. He points out in the circular that the system of riding up the moment of the actual 'Off' has not been a success, and that the jockeys, with the best intentions in the world, are all in such a nervous state, and have their horses so much on their toes, that a large amount of the bad starting is attributable to this cause. He therefore intends trying the walk-up start, and the jockeys will be instructed to line up some distance behind the machine itself, and to remain stationary at a line marked on the turf, or indicated by a man with a flag. The order, "Marchez," will then be given, which will indicate that the jockeys are to start to walk up, and if any of them start trotting or cantering they will be sent back. Not only is it Colonel Feline's intention to lift the gate, but at the same time he will shout out "Go," so that any jockey whose attention is distracted by the vagaries of his mount or otherwise, and has not actually his eyes on the gate, will receive the order of the start orally.'

The Jockey Club is being urged, as this book goes to press, to adopt the new Australian gate, which is now in use in

France and is having a trial in England. This latest invention has five strands and the barrier does not fly straight up in the air as does the webbing on the gates used at present in flat racing in England. The barrier of the new gate mentioned runs forward obliquely for about six yards before it ascends, thus preventing jockeys from anticipating the start. Moreover, it has the additional advantage of remaining perfectly stationary on a windy day. One of the drawbacks to the gate in use at home is the movement of the webbing, which makes it difficult to get nervous horses up to it, and results in 'tricky' horses jumping off under the assumption that the lever has been pulled.

Let me conclude this chapter with a good story told in *Horse and Hound* in 1927 by 'Observer,' regarding an Irish point-to-point meeting :

'Everything was excellent except for the time-keeping on the part of most of the starters, who made such a late appearance that the last race was a matter of two hours late. Heavy clouds, combined with the shades of night, began to impair the visibility, but only one of the Stewards appeared to realize the situation. After vainly trying to speed up the weighing-out process, he rushed off to the Starter and said, "Now, Mr. Starter, go down and start them whether they're there or not!" It is understood the Starter found enough of them "there" to relieve him of the awful necessity of starting nobody.'



## CHAPTER X

### JUDGES AND JUDGING

‘ WE’VE been properly robbed out of our money ! ’ ‘ They never ought to allow that man to judge again ! ’ ‘ The Judge must have backed the horse he placed first—but it never won in this world ! ’ ‘ I think the Judge wants a pair of spectacles ! ’ How often we hear these and similar remarks in the paddock, and in race specials when travelling from one meeting to another. They are rarely made by the regular racing fraternity, who know that it is unfair to criticise a Judge’s decision, unless the finish of a race has been viewed from exactly the same angle as that from which the official responsible for making the placings saw it ; that point, by the way, being the only correct one. Even under these circumstances those who have long been intimately connected with the Turf have little to say, though they may sometimes be convinced in their own minds that the man in the box has made a mistake. They know that the decision of a Judge is final, that there is no court of appeal against it, and that it is useless ‘ screaming ’ or posing as martyrs.

Racing Judges are invariably gentlemen chosen because of their experience and fitness for the important position they hold. They may not be infallible, but they have their minds concentrated on the particular duties they have to perform, they are not allowed to own racehorses, or to have any financial interest in any race at meetings at which they adjudicate. They watch the jockeys being weighed out, note the colours and particularly any alteration from those described on the card ; they know the liveries of owners who are frequently running horses, and, what is equally helpful

to them, they know all the jockeys. In addition to all this number-cloths are now used on all race-courses, though, owing to careless saddling, these are not to be relied upon as a guide, as one figure is often hidden from view, or the cloth may be put on upside down.

Despite experience, and the opportunities a Judge has before a race of familiarising himself with the colours which are in a few minutes to flash past him, mistakes *are* occasionally made to-day as they have been in the past. It must always be so, and the remarkable thing is that with only one man responsible for placing the first four horses and deciding the distances between the first three such mistakes are not more frequent.

It is noteworthy that to-day, when fields are much larger and races are over shorter distances and therefore run much faster than they used to be, there are far fewer errors made in decisions than in the old days, when the task of the man (or men as was often the case) in the box was much less difficult. In early times the responsibility of deciding the first, second, and third to come in at the end of a race was not allowed to rest with one pair of eyes. There were no Judges' boxes then, and several gentlemen—often the Stewards—acted as 'tryers,' the name by which Judges were then described. Although this 'partnership' system lasted for many years it was by no means satisfactory, and, rather than ensuring accuracy, it often made for much confusion, delay, dissatisfaction, and entire lack of confidence, the officials not unfrequently being at variance as to the order of 1, 2, and 3. As it is impossible to request the jockeys to 'just come back and pass the post again exactly as you did before,' as the racing public has always been anxious to know the verdict immediately, and as the 'tryers' seem to have been surrounded by spectators, many of them calling out what they *wished* to be the result of the race (such conduct is not unknown around the Judge's box in these days!), it is easy to imagine how unsatisfactory it must have been to have the Judges publicly arguing amongst themselves, with clamouring pandemonium all round them. Such a system destroyed confidence and was admittedly unsatisfactory, but it

lasted long at a period when close finishes were of rare occurrence, and races run in heats of three or four miles the order of the day.

One of the earliest recorded instances we have of the decision of Judges being questioned was in 1733 at Durham. There were six local gentlemen deputed to pick out the winners and make the subordinate placings ; indeed at that period they appear to have made an endeavour to place every runner. These six Judges, however, could not agree as to which of six horses had won in a close finish. Three of them voted for one horse, three for the other. They doubtless wrangled and argued with the crowd surging round them, and offering both advice and their own particular views. The contradictory decision of these Judges having become public property (though not officially announced), the owners of the respective horses both forthwith claimed the stake. Here was a pretty kettle of fish—three Judges swearing the horse was second which the other three insisted it was first ! Eventually they made a compromise of it and called it a dead heat, the stakes being divided, as Cheny plainly puts it in his early *Racing Calendar*, ‘ to avoid the consequence of the law.’

Another old chronicler, Heber, tells us that despite the fact that there was more than one Judge at Newmarket in 1796 ‘ the horses were so near together ’ in a race over the Beacon Course that no decision could be given. Evidently it did not strike the Judges that they might have given a dead heat. As a matter of fact dead heats were very few and far between in the long-distance races of that period. Such events were run much slower, and there was generally a much bigger margin between the first horses than is the case to-day. Other instances could be cited as proof, but these will suffice to show that even when they had several gentlemen—presumably the most experienced they could find—to act as Judges or ‘ tryers,’ this did not make for greater accuracy or greater confidence in decisions.

The first single-handed professional Judge was Mr. John Hilton, who was appointed in 1770. He continued to act until 1806, and during his *régime* jostling and all manner of

foul play and hooliganism was allowed between jockeys during the course of race riding. Even fighting on horse-back amongst jockeys was not uncommon, as I have already shown. As this would probably be on or about the winning post (or 'Judge's chair,' as the crucial point was known), it would not make it easier to decide the winner in 'near things.' Mr. Hilton was succeeded in 1806 by the first Judge Clark, and since then, except on rare occasions upon which the Stewards' permission has been obtained for the Judge to have someone in the box with him, the results of all important races have depended upon the quickness of one pair of eyes.

At many country meetings, however, the Stewards themselves continued to act as adjudicators, and thirty years after Judge Clark had commenced to occupy the box we find 'Cecil' objecting to the practice of multiple Judges, who only acted at their own local meetings and therefore had not the requisite experience to meet all contingencies. He pointed out that 'the post requires practice,' and added, 'If three or four horses are running in very near together, and even if it is a very near thing with only two, a person unaccustomed to it frequently experiences difficulty in deciding.' He concludes with very sound advice in view of the stories we have heard regarding the 'wineing' and toast-drinking at the old race ordinaries—usually held at the principal hotel in the town before racing started. Listen to 'Cecil':

'Should there be any after dinner racing, I would by all means advise the Stewards to eschew the office (*i.e.* of Judge); as independently of its being a great tie, it precludes the possibility of attending to the little duties of society which most stewards are anxious not to neglect. In order to judge a race correctly the person, whoever may be filling the situation, should be provided with a list of the horses about to run, which list should be carefully made when the jockeys are weighed, and should in fact be made by the Judge himself, never depending on the printed cards, which are very often incorrect. The colour which each jockey wears should be accurately noted. Mr. Clark of Newmarket officiates with the highest credit at many meetings in the South, and Mr. Orton of York, at the Northern ones. Their services more frequently called forth would be very desirable.'

Apropos of Judges not occupying 'the box' after they have dined and wine reminds me of a story told of an Irish Judge in recent years who was found to be absent from his box when the winner flashed past the post. On search being made for him he was discovered to be having a drink with some friends, quite oblivious of the fact that the horses had not only 'gone down' but *come back*! Of course the race was null and void and had to be run again. Another story of long ago—probably fictitious—is to the effect that on one very cold day at Manchester the Judge fortified himself against the weather so liberally that when it came to the last race he had to be supported in the box by a friend who stood behind him. The friend (so runs the legend) told him what had won, and he repeated the numbers to his assistant.

Mention of a Judge not being at his proper station when a race is being run reminds me of an incident in which the present writer was the main actor. It was at Perth. A race described on the card as being two miles was really over a distance of three miles. The jockeys, or some of them, were guided by the card and rode a desperate finish when they had gone two miles. I judged them, put up the numbers, left the box, and was making towards the weighing-room when I saw that the horses were still running. So I returned to my post of duty and ultimately gave another decision. Of course the Stewards asked me for an explanation and I pointed to the race card. They suggested—very kindly—that that was not the guide the Judge should take but the official *Racing Calendar*. I was in error—doubly in error—but I fancy that very few Judges either before or since have taken the trouble to compare the description of races on the 'official card' with that in the *Calendar*.

I have quoted the early views of 'Cecil' as to how a Judge should prepare himself with details of the runners and colours before each race. Let me now repeat what the late Mr. A. E. T. Watson, an acknowledged authority on everything connected with racing, wrote in his book *The Turf*:

'The Judge must be in his box when the horses pass the post. He carefully scrutinises the approaching field through his glasses,

takes in the positions of the leading horses, puts down his glasses when the leaders are near at hand, and so notes precisely how the first three at least—usually four, and occasionally others—pass the imaginary line between his box and the winning post. He can see infinitely better than anyone else how the horses finish ; and though there are legends of Judges having made mistakes in short head verdicts, the chances are that their decisions have been correct. There is reason to suppose that once or twice a blunder has occurred, and never been protested against, when a horse, out by himself, has been an easy winner, but has come up on one side of the course under the box of the Judge whose attention has been fixed upon two or three others on the opposite side fighting out what he has mistaken for the finish. On one occasion there was nearly being no verdict at all. The late Judge Clark, a wholly admirable occupant of the position—though he took no interest in horses or any other animals, and occupied his leisure hours in the study of ecclesiastical architecture—went fast asleep one hot summer's afternoon at Goodwood when the horses were at the post for the Stewards' Cup. He gazed over the shimmering landscape before him till he dozed away, to be suddenly aroused by a happily observant policeman, who shook him up to consciousness just when the field had reached the distance, so that he had time to fulfil his duties. . . . Very often after a close race only the Judge can say for certain which has won, and the spectators wait with the utmost tension of anxiety to see what numbers he has instructed his assistant to hoist in the frame.'

Tod Sloan on more than one occasion was certain that he had won races which were not given to him. He had his own ideas as to the construction of Judges' boxes, and I do not hesitate to say that if these suggestions had been adopted the difficulties and strain of race judging would have been materially increased. He proposed depriving the official in question of the ability to watch the progress of races, and thus of the opportunity of forming some idea of the horses he is likely to have to place. Tod was always certain he had won the Cambridgeshire of 1897 on St. Cloud, but the Judge's verdict was that Comfrey, ridden by K. Cannon, had beaten Sloan by a head, with Sandia (A. White) and Cortegar (S. Loates) dividing each other by heads. This was a very thrilling finish, officially 'won by a head, same between

second, third, and fourth,' with Galtee More, the favourite, nowhere. Here are Sloan's own words :

' I saw one after the other drop out, and from the Bushes home there were only three of us. I had to watch Sandia, who I always kept almost clear of ; Sir William Ingram's horse Comfrey was on the other side of the course. I was always confident that I had the race in my pocket, but I kept the big horse going nicely all the same, and the charge against me of over-confidence was not merited. As a matter of fact I shall always believe—in fact I *know*—that Comfrey, who was given the race, was only third, Sandia being second, three-quarters of a length from me. There was no one more surprised than I myself, and in my trouble I may have said that the race had been 'stolen from me.' But I made no charge whatever against Mr. Robinson, the Judge, a gentleman I have always had respect for. What I *did* say in my disappointment was certainly twisted round. The next day Mr. Robinson, with a newspaper man, came to the jockeys' room and asked me exactly what I did say about him. I told him frankly that I thought I had won, but I never uttered one word against his honest conviction that he had seen the race the way he had placed them. My opinion, as I told him, was that the width of the course, and the fact that the Judge's box was set low between them, made it impossible to judge a finish correctly. He listened very pleasantly to me, and said he was quite certain that I had not been outspoken about him personally. . . . That race has always stuck in my gizzard, and I shall always wish that someone had taken a photograph of the finish.'

The peculiar views which Sloan held, which, as I have said, would add to the difficulties of Judges, included having such officials screened in so as ' to make it impossible for the Judge to follow the race with his eye until the horses were almost passing him, then he could take in the first, second, third, and fourth.' Sloan added : ' As it is now, a Judge follows the leaders for a long way and may get one set of colours fixed in his mind and not get it out even by the time the verdict has to be given. His duty is to see the horses as they pass the post, and that is all.'

Racing Judges are expected to be Argus-eyed and to note the incidents and accidents during the course of each race, so that they may assist the Stewards with their evidence in case of an objection or enquiry. Whether Tod Sloan was right or wrong in his opinion that he won Comfrey's Cambridgeshire on St. Cloud, it is indubitably a fact that a Judge is much better placed for deciding, much more collected, and without the natural partisan prejudice of interested jockeys.

My own experience has been that just as jockeys are notoriously the worst tipsters, so also are those taking part in a race entirely unreliable as to what has won, or what are the other placings. Those who have heard them coming back to the paddock gate after a close finish, and before the numbers have been hoisted, know how sometimes three or four of them bet amongst themselves that they have ridden the winner, whilst when the jockeys reach the scale before the Judge's arrival in the weighing-room, there are frequently two or three jockeys claiming to have secured fourth place. The very fact that however much 'hot air' there may be in the paddock amongst the crowd, jockeys as a rule are quite content with the Judge's decision in very close finishes, and have complete confidence in that official, is evidence of the unquestioning reliance they place in the man in the box, and their own uncertainty, as well as inability, to tell just where they were on reaching the winning post.

A story is told of one old-time jockey asking the Judge before he left the box at the now defunct Richmond (Yorks) meeting how far he had won. The Judge replied 'You were beaten by half a length!' 'Thank you,' was the reply, '*that makes all the difference!*'

What was always considered in some quarters an historic mistake on the part of a Judge was in Voltigeur's St. Leger, when Judge Clark gave a dead heat between Russborough and Voltigeur. Now Judge Johnson, who acted on the northern circuit for forty years, but had given up Doncaster in exchange for York, was standing by the side of the box at the conclusion of the St. Leger and always swore 'it was never a dead heat. Voltigeur won right enough the first time, only Clark gave it against him—but I never said a word.' This rather proves



what I said in the opening of these notes, that it would probably not make for any greater accuracy to have more than one official in the box responsible for decisions.

The St. Leger also provides additional evidence of this, for when Lord Cleveland's Chorister was given the race by a head, with Mr. Skipsey's The Saddler second, the Judge's son stood at the side of the box and when his father called out 'The Saddler,' he was heard to say 'No! father, Chorister.' The Judge took his son's verdict, and to the surprise of most spectators Chorister's number was hoisted. Orton, who was a well-known racing Judge in the north and also published a *Racing Calendar*, records the result of the St. Leger in question in rather unusual terms thus: 'The race was *given* to Chorister by a head.' Tommy Nicholson rode The Saddler and appears to have lost the race by bad riding after he had won, and then lost it a second time after he had won it by the Judge's *fiat*. Nicholson's friends endeavoured to make out that he had ridden a brilliant race, and thus drew from old Squire Sutton (the writer of some famous northern sporting songs), one of the clever verses for which he is still remembered. It runs thus:

Compare dismal midnight with morning,  
A prayer or a psalm with a curse;  
They say that Tom never rode better,  
I'm damned if he ever rode worse!

There was considerable feeling at Epsom in 1891 over a decision between General Owen William's Corniche 8 st. 8 lb. (Weldon) and Mr. Arthur James's Blakesley 8st. 11 lb. (Rickaby). The owner of Blakesley was certain the Judge was in error in his verdict which gave the race to Corniche by a head. There was much excitement over the close finish, and this was increased when it became known that Mr. Arthur James had taken the unusual, and always abortive, course of objecting to the decision. The Stewards naturally were powerless, as in the even more famous Cumberland Plate objection to be mentioned later. At Ascot the Stewards dismissed the objection, though they did hear the Judge's evidence and his expression of certainty that there had been no mistake. The James faction were not, however, satisfied.





They were convinced that they had the better horse and that she had beaten the other filly in the Mickleham Stakes and could do so again. So a match was arranged between the pair over the same distance (five furlongs) at Ascot for £500 aside. The public evidently agreed with Mr. Arthur James that Blakesley was the better animal and that he had won the original race at Epsom, for odds of 6 to 5 were laid on the filly, which Weldon again rode. Jack Watts had the mount on Corniche in the match, and he succeeded in beating Blakesley by half-a-length, thus vindicating Judge Robinson.

The Carlisle incident referred to almost created a panic in the paddock, as those present will remember. Incidentally, it is worth noting that whereas it is usually the *hoi polloi* who lose their heads on these occasions, and froth and fume in their excitement, on this occasion some of the most experienced and best bred sportsmen in all the north country quite lost all self-control and dignity. It was in 1887 that there was this close finish between three horses in the Cumberland Plate, then a race which held a much higher place in the estimation of northerners than is the case to-day. Mr. Tom Lawley was Judge on the occasion in question, and he gave his decision as follows :

Marquess of Hasting's Queen's Counsel, 3 y.,			
6 st. 12 lb.	-	-	Griffiths 1
Mr. Jardine's Mossypaul, 3 y., 6 st. 12 lb.	-	-	Chandley 2
Mr. W. Sanderson's Nappa, 4 y., 7 st. 6 lb.	-	-	Hesp 3
Won by a head, same between second and third.			

As soon as the numbers went up there was a demonstration of disapproval in the paddock and outside it, and Mr. Jardine and his friends were certain that only a temporary error had been made which would be speedily rectified. They were as excited as anyone else, and that first-rate gentleman rider, the late Mr. C. J. Cunningham, got to the Judge before he had reached the weighing-room and endeavoured to persuade him that he had had the wrong number hoisted. Then he implored Mr. Lawley for his own reputation's sake to seek the Stewards' permission to alter the placings.

It was all of no avail. The Judge was confident that he had given a correct decision and would not budge, despite a crowd of gesticulating and arguing Turfites of repute who escorted him to the weighing-room. So incensed was Mr. Jardine, and so were his feelings worked upon, that he lodged a protest with the Stewards, though he knew as well as they did that they were powerless to revise the decision of a Judge, or instruct him to do so, no matter what their own private opinions might be. However, they had a consultation with Mr. Lawley, and, finding him adamant, accepted his invitation to accompany him to the Judge's box, and there heard him describe the finish of the race as he saw it. On their return they issued the following announcement :

‘The Stewards have no power to alter the decision of the Judge, but after inspecting the Judge's box, and observing the angle at which it is situated, they agree with the Judge's decision.’

This did not satisfy the owner of Mossaul, in fact it only added fuel to the fire and irritated him more. He immediately expressed his intention of never running another horse at the Carlisle meeting. As is usual, when a Judge is supposed to have made a mistake there were many both for and against, even amongst those who had no financial interest in the race.

There was in quite recent times another very close finish in a race at Carlisle, when a much-liked local owner ran a horse called De Combat, which came with a rush on the post just too late to beat another named Little Quaker. On that occasion the present writer was Judge, and standing at the same angle was one of the most astute and long experienced Judges of racing in the north. As the writer gave the numbers to the official appointed to receive them and place them in the frame, the well-known racing man referred to remarked : ‘What was it?—a short head?’ My reply was ‘Yes.’ ‘That's just what *I* thought,’ he reiterated. Those on the stand, or many of them, thought otherwise, and there was again a demonstration of disapproval.

One of the Stewards approached the Judge and asked : ‘Are you quite satisfied with your decision?’ To which I

replied, 'I have not a shadow of doubt'; and there the matter ended officially, though in the weighing-room there was a little scene, and on the Judge going to the box for the next race his path was not strewn with flowers or compliments, but lined with scowling-visaged, disappointed backers who muttered caustic criticisms as to incompetence, together with wishes for his future consignment to regions in which, so far as we know, there is more heat than sport.

In still more recent times at Hexham, when the writer was again officiating and another local horse called Jugalis was beaten by a short head, an angry party came down to the box, and after hurling most abusive epithets at the occupant, promised him that his hotel at Newcastle would be discovered that night and that he would be unable to see to judge on the following day. As it happened—maybe fortunately for him—the man in the box was not staying at Newcastle, so escaped the fate awaiting him!

After all it is not all beer and skittles being a racing Judge! Others who hold, or have held, the responsible and anxious position could tell many stories in support of this, but it is worth placing on record that those most concerned in what they honestly believe to be mistakes (which possibly mean very considerable financial loss to them) have the least, or nothing at all, to say to the Judge on such occasions—I mean the owners, trainers, and jockeys. They know, of course, that there is no appeal against a Judge's decision; they feel, too, that however certain they may be that the horse in which they are particularly interested has won, it is the Judge who is best placed for seeing. They also know that anything in the nature of violent criticism, abuse, or impertinence would possibly land them before the Stewards with a heavy fine as the result. In addition to all this one likes to think that they are good sportsmen, who take what they may conceive to be the rough with the smooth.

It is those with no interest beyond a wager who speak of the Judge as incompetent, of being 'robbed,' and who suggest that the man in the box has had some ulterior motive in giving what he knows to have been a verdict contrary to what he has plainly seen. Such vile aspersions, of course,

come from irresponsible Toms, Dicks, and Harrys, whose opinions are neither worth listening to nor discussing.

Mr. Alexander Scott, in his *Turf Memories of Sixty Years*, tells two stories of 'judge incidents'—one regarding the rare occasions on which a jockey has forgotten himself and allowed his temper and tongue to run riot, and another of the action of a crowd of hooligans determined to compel the Judge to alter his placings in a race. Speaking of Croydon meeting he says :

'An incident at this meeting—one which tickled me greatly—was a difference of opinion between the Judge and a jockey over the result of a flat race. George Jarvis was the jockey, and had fought out the finish of a race on a horse running wide on the opposite side of the course to its nearest opponent. Jarvis was so dead certain he had won, that when he saw another horse's number go up as the winner he rode back to the Judge's box instead of returning to the paddock to unsaddle. "You blind old fool!" he exclaimed to the Judge, "I won that race by half-a-length," what time the spectators of the little comedy laughed heartily.'

'Altercations with the Judge are of very rare occasion' (continues Mr. Scott), 'and I can only remember one other case of this within my experience. It was at Wye in Kent, when a horse called Framboise, owned by Mr. Solomon Savage, a Lewes marine store dealer, and one of the quaintest men who ever owned a racehorse, was placed second by the Judge when everybody thought it had won. A hot argument between the spectators and the man in the chair ensued, but the latter was adamant, and up went the horse's number as the winner. Then the band struck up with a vengeance. The crowd surged round the frame, pulled down the winner's number and put up that of Framboise. Down came the frame again by the Judge's order for the correct number to be put in, but yet again did the crowd pull down the frame to put the number of Framboise in. Eventually the Judge got his way, but the situation looked very ugly for a long time.'

As a matter of fact during a quarter of a century's experience of racing I have never seen a Judge require police

protection but once, though I can recall a number of cases of jockeys who have had to be escorted to the weighing-room. I have heard unpleasant 'demonstrations' against Judges, and have on two occasions known Judges rather concerned in consequence as to their personal safety after the day's racing, but there has never to my knowledge been an instance of an official holding this position being molested. The fact of the matter is that Judges are known by sight to very few outside those whose business admits them to the weighing-room. There between races he sits to watch the jockeys weighed out so as to familiarise himself with the colours they wear. It is sometimes as well that he can mix unknown amongst the crowds waiting for race trains and listen to demands made for his head.

There were many who insisted that George Fordham won the Derby of 1863 on Lord St. Vincent's Lord Clifden, but the Judge (Mr. Clark) thought otherwise, and his verdict was that Macaroni just had his head in front at the finish. In *The History of the Derby* we are told :

'The result was a terrible blow to Lord St. Vincent and his friends. Half the peerage was on Lord Clifden, and the public were substantial losers. But no one felt the defeat of the favourite more than George Fordham. He had arranged to dine with some friends that night at Carshalton, and riding thither after the races, accompanied by Sait, a steeplechase jockey, he mercilessly thrashed with his whip a man who (addressing Sait and not recognising Fordham) declared that Lord Clifden had been deliberately pulled. This incident only made matters worse, and by the time he reached Carshalton Fordham was so upset that he would neither have any dinner nor enter the dining-room, but sat on the stairs outside and shed bitter tears.'

It is recorded that the Judge said that the only difference between the two horses at the finish was that Lord St. Vincent's horse had his head down on reaching the post and Macaroni had his head up. Subsequently John Osborne won an historic St. Leger on Lord Clifden, and was carried shoulder high into the weighing-room.

In the memorable Derby of 1913 (marked and marred



by Suffragette interference which resulted in the fall of Anmer), there was *possibly* an error made by the Judge in his placings. The tense excitement of the race, its incidents and accidents, were such that no one knew whether Craganour or Aboyeur had won, or whether it was a dead heat, till the numbers went up—Craganour, 1 ; Aboyeur, 2 ; Luvois, 3 ; won by a head, a neck between second and third. Great Sport was officially fourth, but Day Comet, one of the first four to pass the post, was not placed. A responsible eye-witness<sup>1</sup> thus put into words what many, either rightly or wrongly, thought : ‘ Hidden as he was by the other three, the Judge did not see Day Comet, and very few other people saw him either.’ In view of the disqualification of the winner for not keeping a straight course, the placing of the fourth became of considerable importance, but the Judge did not alter his decision.

The late Sir George Chetwynd, in his *Reminiscences*, tells the story of what he describes as ‘ one of those races in which the hoisting of the winner’s number is a source of consternation and surprise to onlookers.’ This was at Newmarket, ‘ and everyone ’ (according to Sir George) ‘ at the post was convinced that Archer, on Peeping Tom, had beaten St. Leger ; but the Judge informed us that it was not so. The owner of Peeping Tom, so convinced was he, supported, no doubt, by the opinion of friends who had backed his horse, at once lodged an objection against the Judge’s decision, which, however, the Stewards rightly refused to entertain, and he was compensated later on in the week by winning the International Handicap the first year of its inauguration.’

The same authority has another story, this time regarding the Two Thousand Guineas which Fordham won on Petronel for the Duke of Beaufort. This was one of the finest races ever witnessed on the Rowley Mile, Webb just failing to win on the dark Muncaster, who was probably rather a handful owing to its being his first appearance on a race-course.

/ ‘ As an instance ’ (adds Sir George) ‘ of the difficulty of judging what has won on the wide Newmarket courses, it is noteworthy that so shrewd and careful an observer as the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Edward Moorhouse in *Bloodstock Breeders’ Review*.

Duke of Beaufort was deceived as to the result of this race. Carefully watching the finish, he thought that Muncaster had been victorious, and when the horses had passed the post, turned away, remarking—for he had seen how strong Petronel was going at the finish—“Two strides further and I should have won.” His surprise and satisfaction at finding that he *had* won were equally great.’

Apropos of this, the present writer, when acting as Judge, has twice placed as winners horses ridden by their owners, who declared they had been beaten. In one of these cases the owner certainly didn’t *want* to win, and if his number had not gone up the chances are that he would have had to face very severe cross-examination and enquiry in the Stewards’ room. It is sometimes more difficult to lose than to win races, and though I do not believe there is half, or a quarter, of the malpractice on the Turf the man in the street in his ignorance imagines, it may be taken as almost a certainty that when an owner protests against a decision which makes one of his horses a winner in a close thing, matters have not gone ‘according to plan’ and some future *coup* has been prevented, or an intended pitch queered in some way.

In this connection let me tell another story in which I played a subordinate part. It further illustrates how little to be relied upon is private judgment in close finishes if the spectator who ventures to express an opinion as to the result is not in a perfectly direct line with the winning post.

When my old friend, Mr. R. I. Robson (still hale and hearty), was turning out his share of winners from Farnham, near Knaresborough, and, incidentally, betting pretty heavily both on his own and other people’s ‘good things,’ he had a very bad York meeting one year and was cleared out of ‘ready.’ He had a little mare in the last race on the concluding day, and upon her he relied to ‘get him out’ and retrieve his losses. So he sent for a local cattle-dealer in the morning of the day in which the mare was to run and sold him twenty beasts out of his park, setting off immediately for Knavesmire to invest the proceeds. The last race came, he backed his mare at 5’s to win him about £2000, despite the fact that another mutual trainer friend told us he was

certain to win the race as his runner had come on a good deal since last it and Robson's mare had met. We stood and watched the race together, as I have already said, in what seemed to be a fairly direct line with the Judge's box and winning post—probably, as things turned out, it wasn't. Anyhow, the result, as it appeared to us, was that the danger of which we had been warned had won and that Bob's £2000 was lost by the shortest of short heads. It is futile holding inquests after racing losses—indeed Robson's invariable motto was 'the worse the day with the bookies, the better the dinner at night.' So, to get out of the crush we made a bee-line for the private entrance to the paddock, which is used as a public exit (by the few who know it) to Knavesmire's high-road after racing.

On our way thither we met the Judge, who was all smiles and pleasantly remarked, 'Congratulations, Mr. Robson !' To this 'Bob' replied, 'I wish there had really been occasion for it, it would have made a lot of difference to me.'

'*Why, you've won !*' reiterated the Judge. '*What more do you want ?*'

On turning round to look at the numbers we saw that the head defeat (as we had thought) was in reality a head victory, and away we went to 'draw' with a very different expression on our faces. It was one more case of an angle deceiving the eye, and how the eye *may* be deceived in this way is clearly demonstrated if you stand first to the right, then to the left, and then immediately in front of a clock. You will find that there is a minute or two difference in each position. It is the same on a race-course, and hence comes the saying—often, it is true, combated and challenged—'the Judge alone knows.'

York was once the scene of another surprise decision which created something of a panic amongst the assembled crowd. Unfortunately the Judge (Mr. Orton) is said to have declared one horse to be the winner, and then, after some delay, altered his opinion and given the verdict to another horse by 'half a head.' The two animals were named Consol (the winner), and Contest ; and so much feeling and discussion were there over the decision that the Judge made and published a

written explanation<sup>1</sup>—a course no later day official in the same capacity has ever followed, no matter how criticised either by the public or the sporting Press (the latter of which rarely makes more than mild passing mention in such cases that 'the decision did not meet with general approval,' or 'there were many who thought —— had won but the Judge's view did not coincide'). Here is Judge Orton's defence of of his decision :

'At the start the two, as if afraid of expending too much of their power, deliberately walked for the first quarter of a mile, a mutual trot succeeded, and at last a slow canter, in which Scott took the lead. By degrees, to try every gradation of pace, the speed was increased to severe running, both horses keeping close to each other to the rails, where the challenge commenced, and from here up to the Judge's stand the whip and spur, the lift, and every exertion that horses and men could produce was put into requisition without producing any material advantage to either, and within the last three or four strides of the ending post it would have defied the conscientious judgment of men to have declared to whom the advantage belonged. However Scott, either from fatigue or intention, gave over working his horse, and left loose of his head in the last two strides, by which Consol landed in a sort of stumbling manner, throwing out his head and neck at the post, and gaining the stakes by only half-a-head, with the odds 3 to 1 on him. From the race being so closely contested, and only won in the last two strides, which rendered it impossible for one-thousandth part of the spectators to have seen, the greatest possible confusion ensued among a host of petty betters that was ever witnessed upon any course in the kingdom, and although the Judge in due time declared Consol the winner by half-a-head, yet numbers, who no doubt felt prompted by what to them were weighty and substantial reasons, used their persuasive eloquence to induce him to reverse his decision, or to convince him that he must have made a mistake. Others, who when interest is in the case, think might is right, unblushingly stood forward

<sup>1</sup>In *The Sporting Magazine*, to which he contributed as 'Alfred Highflyer.'

to declare that he had first "pronounced Contest the winner, and afterwards awarded the decision to Consol." However, none of these schemes would succeed, and the decision, as first given and strictly persisted in, was, on an investigation of the case by Lord Kelburn and C. Wilson, Esq., declared correct. Such scenes as these are really a disgrace to any race meeting, and if Judges in the conscientious discharge of their duties are to be assailed with volleys of abuse from myriads of interested individuals, merely because their decisions do not suit their pockets, we shall soon see these posts of confidence filled by any but men of integrity.'

Mr. Judge Orton of York, a famous racing official in his day, was not a very sound prophet, for there is still the same firing of volleys of abuse at the man in the box when his verdicts are at variance with the opinions of the crowd. Possibly in these times race crowds are better behaved, and, in addition, the Judge's box is not so accessible to the crowd as it was, so that the official who occupies it is often ignorant of the criticisms levelled against him, and of the feeling his decisions have aroused. Occasionally an immediate roar of disapproval calls the Judge's attention to a palpable mistake he has made—such as hoisting the number of a horse which has been tailed off, or at any rate never in the argument, as having been amongst the first three. Otherwise it is fortunate that those who occupy the box have not their anxieties—and the position is an anxious one—added to by irresponsible abuse and insult.

It is interesting to add in connection with close finishes and the duties of Judges, that the late Judge Clark used to decide near things by the position of the jockeys' heads rather than those of the horses'. It was for this reason that Fred Archer and Fordham both adopted the crouching position when finishing long before the days of Tod Sloan and the 'monkey seat.' It used to be said at the time that Archer's head won many races judged by Mr. Clark. One particular instance of this was in the City and Suburban of 1880. In this race Master Kildare and Leoville were for some distance neck and neck and appeared to pass the post so. However, Archer was 'right up his horse's neck' and thus had his head

in front. He got the race, and the authorities of that day insisted that it was *his* head and not Master Kildare's which was in front at the post and which won the race.

Never in England have we had such a remarkable incident as that related by an English Judge as having taken place in the Argentine, where they used to have (and may still have) three Judges to act conjointly in the box. English Judges are, of course, not allowed to bet at any meeting at which they officiate, but it is evidently otherwise in the Argentine, for the three Judges referred to had a great fancy for a certain runner in one race and had 'a parcel' on it. To their dismay the supposed certainty—like so many more—'came undone.' The trio badly wanted the money they had hoped to win and, moreover, couldn't pay the stake they had lost—but let the Judge tell his own story : <sup>1</sup>

'The horse had not won, but they would simply say it had and hoist its number, and up the number went accordingly. But the affair was not so simple as it had seemed. Argentina is a country where people carry revolvers, and where likewise they have a ready disposition to use them. A number of truculent sportsmen, who had backed the real winner, surrounded the Judge's box and stated that they were not going to be robbed. A mistake had been made and the race awarded to the wrong horse ; that mistake had to be rectified, or exceedingly awkward consequences they hinted—with their hands in their pistol pockets—would at once ensue. Here was another dilemma for the trio. How could they escape it ? A glance at the threatening mob that continued to gather decided them. They must exhibit the right number and pretend to have made a mistake. Up went the number that should have gone up at first, and the three breathed with relief—for a moment. For other people, it appeared, besides themselves, had fancied the second ; these had seen it given as the winner, with some surprise if with more satisfaction, and now, after having counted their gains, they were to be deprived of them because the Judges pretended to have committed a blunder. Would they stand it ? Not for a moment !

Another crowd, backers of the second that had received the original verdict, in turn surrounded the box, and the Judges were told that this sort of thing was not to be endured. They had given a most excellent decision to begin with, and if they did not

<sup>1</sup> *The Racing World and its Inhabitants*, p. 137.

steadfastly abide by it there would be serious trouble in connection with powder and bullets. Danger awaited the luckless three in either case, supporters of the first and of the second horse alike had six-shooters and an angry inclination to shoot. What could they do? Suddenly one of the trio had another inspiration. They would call it a dead-heat! Backers of both would then alike get something; so up went the "O," and beneath it the two numbers side by side.'

John Kent in his *Life of Lord George Bentinck* records what he claimed were 'two very flagrant errors in the decision of races,' both of which affected the Goodwood stable. One was in 1824: 'When the Duke of Richmond's mare Dandizette ran for the Goodwood Stakes, and passed the winning post first; but the race was given by Mr. Greville, who acted as Judge, to Lord Verulam's Vitellina. At that time the Judge's box was perched aloft, considerably above the level of the race-track. Dandizette finished close to the rails, and passed right under the Judge's chair without attracting Mr. Greville's observation, which was concentrated on Vitellina and The Ghost on the opposite side of the course—the latter hanging so much against the former that she was in great danger of being forced against the rails. The jostling race between these two animals absorbed Mr. Greville's field of vision, and he saw nothing of Dandizette; but the oversight was so apparent that Lord Verulam offered the stakes to the Duke of Richmond, stating he was quite convinced that Dandizette had won easily enough. His Grace thanked Lord Verulam for his honourable proposal, but declined to receive the stakes, stating that whatever his own private opinion and that of others may be, the Judge's decision was irrevocable and must be obeyed. The Earl of Burlington was also present on this occasion, it being the only race meeting at Goodwood that his Lordship was ever known to attend. He said to the Duke, "So you have won the race; but it has been given against you by a Judge who is above all things a Newmarket man!" Again, in the year 1837, the Duke of Richmond's Skillygolee, three-year-old, ran for the Gold Cup at Southampton, which he won easily enough the first time; but the Judge gave it a dead heat between him and Mr. Sidney

Herbert's Bulbridge, three-year-old. It was so glaring an error that I felt compelled to remonstrate with the Judge, whose reply was, "I hope you are not offended, but we wanted to make all the sport we could." The next heat I told Reeves (the jockey who rode Skillygolee) not to have another dead heat, and he won by four or five lengths. As I rode past the winning post I asked the Judge how far the horse had won this time. He replied, "By a length." "Not a bad length either," I rejoined.'

To this John Kent adds : 'Occurrences of this sort were by no means uncommon in those days.' Perhaps it was more to those days than the present that the cynical gibe was made that 'You can't tell what's won till the numbers go up, and not always *then* !'

'Vandriver,'<sup>1</sup> writing of the Newmarket October Meeting of 1869, told the following story : 'The other event of the first day was the close race between Kingcraft and Normanby in the Buckenham—so close a one, that Mr. Thomas Jennings and a member of the fourth estate witnessing the race from the side opposite the chair, were so impressed with the idea that Normanby had won that they went on their way (it was surmised in the direction of Jarvis's booth) lamenting, and for some time refused credence to the fact that a head had just landed Lord Falmouth's colt. Often as the contradictory evidence that the two sides of the course give has astonished even old habitués (with the exception of Mr. Hodgman, who has the most wonderful eye we know, and is never wrong, beating in this respect a well-known and omniscient editor), we never remember a more startling instance than this. However, Normanby was beaten a head instead of winning by half-a-length as was by some people vainly imagined.'

Mr. Thomas Haydon, who was so intimately connected with the Colonial Turf, used to relate some interesting stories regarding Judges, judging, and Judges' mistakes in Australia. He tells us<sup>2</sup> of 'scenes' amongst the rowdy element when anything occurred not to their liking, and says that on

<sup>1</sup> A delightful old-time contributor to the defunct *Baily's Magazine*.

<sup>2</sup> *Sporting Reminiscences*, p. 69.



one occasion matters assumed a serious aspect over a decision given by a Judge. 'It was,' he says, 'one of those unaccountable things for which explanation seems impossible, and no one even questioned his honour and integrity in the slightest degree. But, singular to relate, in this particular race, where there were but four runners, the number of a horse was hoisted which in the opinion of everybody—at least, I never heard anyone express a contrary opinion—did not even get a place. Every one thought it was an error which would be promptly rectified, and the Judge was interviewed by the Stewards to give him an opportunity of amending his, to their ideas, palpable mistake. But he maintained that his judgment was correct, and refused to alter his verdict. The anger of the crowd was somewhat bitter, and it was thought desirable that the Judge should go home under friendly escort to protect him from probable violence.'

The most remarkable decision I ever saw given was at Thirsk in 1911, when the Judge gave the White Mare Two Year Old Plate to Ask Papa, though the late Mr. R. C. Vyner's Formamint had obviously won by nearly a length. There was no similarity in the colours, it wasn't a 'near thing,' and everyone was astounded—most of all the owners and trainers of the horses placed first and second. There was no question in this case of an angle or viewpoint having proved deceptive to the onlookers, and W. Bullock confidently got into the scale to weigh in as having ridden the winner. 'But you were second!' said the Clerk of the Scales; 'Randall won it.' 'Not me!' said Randall, who had ridden Mr. William Wilson's Ask Papa. 'Your number is in the frame,' retorted the official at the scale.

By this time the Judge had returned to the weighing-room, and had to force his way through a surging crowd of excited and turbulent wonderers, all of whom expected the mistake to be speedily rectified. Mr. R. C. Vyner, quivering with excitement, was there before him, the Stewards (Mr. G. S. Thompson, Sir W. P. Wilson-Todd, and Mr. J. C. Wilmot Smith) had a consultation with Mr. Vyner and the Judge, but the latter declined to be per-

suaded that he was in error, and so the race stands in the *Calendar* for all time :

Mr. W. Wilson's Ask Papa, 9 st.	- - -	H. Randall	1
Mr. R. C. Vyner's Formamint, 9 st.	- - -	W. Bullock	2
Mr. H. Whitworth's Chicken Pie, 8 st. 12 lb.		J. Clark	3
Mr. W. Chatterton's Lilaline, 9 st. 5 lb.	-	E. Wheatley	4

7 to 4 against Lilaline ; 3 to 1 Formamint ; 5 to 1 Ask Papa ; 100 to 7 Chicken Pie. Won by half-a-length ; neck second and third.

This happened at the Spring meeting, and it was deemed wise to have the Judge guarded by police during the remainder of the afternoon. It was rumoured that Mr. Vyner intended to withdraw his support from the Thirsk fixture, of which he had long been one of the mainstays, but at the subsequent Autumn fixture he again ran Formamint (by Minting), this time in the North Yorkshire Nursery Handicap. R. Wilkinson wore the violet jacket with white belt—so popular on the northern circuit and still retained by Lady A. Compton-Vyner—on this occasion, and won by two lengths.

I believe that later the Judge admitted that he had made an error in the Ask Papa race at the Spring meeting, and that he should have sunk his pride and followed the advice of such good judges as the late Mr. G. S. Thompson (who lived a mile or two out of Thirsk, and was one of the best gentlemen riders, if not the best, of the day), and Sir W. P. Wilson-Todd and reversed his placings. There are some of us who will never forget that race and the electricity in the air that afternoon at the pleasant little Thirsk meeting ; and often does one hear the incident referred to yet when racing men discuss Judges, judging, and decisions with which they are at variance. Then the incident above related comes out invariably as a sort of *pièce de resistance*. In more than ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the Judge is probably right in close finishes—but he certainly wasn't on this occasion !

The late Mr. William Vasey, father of Mr. Melton Vasey, the welter-weight Doncaster trainer of to-day, always felt that he had a similar experience to the late Mr. Vyner's. He had in training at Hambleton a useful horse called

Undecided, owned by Mr. W. Newton. In 1895 it ran sixth in the Lincolnshire Handicap, won the Bestwood Park Handicap at Leicester in a common canter, was beaten at Newmarket by a neck by Astana (to whom it gave 3 st. 4 lb.) in the Second Welter Handicap, and was then put away for the Stewards' Cup at Goodwood. For this Undecided was tried a certainty. There were twenty-two runners, and H. Toon, who had previously ridden Undecided to victory, was on the back of Wise Virgin, who had won on its previous outing at Newmarket with Toon in the saddle, when it beat Maltravers by a neck. A similar verdict was given in the Stewards' Cup, Undecided starting favourite at 5 to 1, with Amandier at 10's, and Wise Virgin at 100 to 8. The Judge's placings were :

Wise Virgin, 3 yr., 6 st. 8 lb. - - - -	H. Toon	1
Undecided, 4 yr., 7 st. 5 lb. - - - -	Allsopp	2
Amandier, aged, 7 st. 10 lb. - - - -	Finlay	3
Bentworth, 3 yr., 7 st. 10 lb. - - - -	Bradford	4

Won by a short head ; two lengths ; a poor fourth.

Now Vasey and his party had backed Undecided to win them a big fortune, and to his dying day he always insisted that his horse had won by a neck. He tackled the Judge before that official had reached the weighing-room, and said, 'You've made a big mistake,' and many trainers, who watched the race with him, were of the same opinion. It is noticeable, however, that when a favourite is beaten by a narrow margin there is always a considerable number ready to charge the Judge with being in error. The Undecided and Wise Virgin race is often yet quoted as an instance of a Judge having 'become flustered' and having lost his head. But even the unanimous opinion of a score of disinterested and experienced spectators on a stand at an angle does not prove that this was so. Indeed, the more experienced the spectators are, the less likely are they to advance their views as to a result as anything more than 'what they first thought,' rather than what they subsequently believe to have been the order of the finish. As I have said, however, the late William Vasey felt all through the remainder of his life that it was not

Wise Virgin, but a mistake on the part of the man in the box at Goodwood, which robbed Undecided of the Stewards' Cup victory and himself of the biggest wager he ever had in his life. The clamourings and excited vilifications of an irresponsible crowd either at Goodwood or anywhere else count for little or nothing, and the only effect they had at Goodwood was to make the Judge feel extremely uncomfortable.

Of temporary mistakes made by Judges, and speedily put right, there are many instances. These are generally connected with the second, third, or fourth horses, and are important only in the case of place-betting, or an objection, though they also influence handicappers in their future imposts.

The late Mr. John Osborne once told me that during the whole of his very long career as a jockey—and few jockeys have worn silk longer—he had had hardly a quarrel with the decisions given by Judges except in the Middle Park Plate of 1874, when he rode the hitherto unbeaten Holy Friar. To the end he always thought he won this race for the sporting Lincolnshire clergyman, the Rev. J. W. King, who raced under the name of 'Mr. Launde.' As a matter of fact Holy Friar, which started favourite, was not even placed, the official result of the race being :

Mr. R. R. Christopher's b.c. Plebian, 8 st. 6 lb.	Mordan	1
Lord Dupplin's Per Se, 8 st. 3 lb. - - -	T. Cannon	2
Prince Batthyany's Galopin, 8 st. 13 lb. -	Morris	3

Won by a head ; the same between second and third.

There was a field of twenty-four for this race, and long afterwards to say it was a 'case of Holy Friar' up Middleham way connoted chicanery, sharp-practice, dishonesty, or untruth. It was Holy Friar's sixth consecutive success, and the same owner's victories with Apology in the One Thousand Guineas and the Oaks, resulted in Mr. 'Launde's' Bishop objecting to one of the clergy in his own diocese owning racehorses. It had been public property for long that the Vicar of Ashby-de-la-Launde bred, owned, and ran racehorses, and the inference was that there was no harm in a cleric doing all this so long as his horses didn't win races !

Apropos of what I have described as 'temporary mistakes,' at Doncaster a couple of years ago, when the Judge mistook the colours of Nabob for those of Lucentio, his attention was called to the error in the numbers he had hoisted by the howling of the crowd. There was considerable delay, however, before the error was rectified, for once the numbers are in the frame they cannot be altered except by permission of the Stewards.

There was also 'howling' at Ayr in September 1926 when the result of the Arran Nursery was announced. A dead heat was given between Quivil and Fritters, with Last of the Lenas a short head behind. The general opinion was that Last of the Lenas had won. Probably ninety-nine out of every hundred held this view, but most of those who thought so, and had sufficient experience of calm disinterested race watching, accepted the Judge's decision without question if not without criticism, as to what the result of the race appeared to have been to them. All one heard from such was 'It seemed to me from where I stood that Mr. Dugdale's horse had won it.' The qualification of '*from where I stood*' makes all the difference.

It was the same in the Two Thousand Guineas of 1923. There were many who were quite certain that Twelve Pointer had won, and yet, like John Osborne on Holy Friar, he wasn't even placed in the race.

In 1875 Maidment, who rode Lord Aylesford's Claremont, was, like many more, certain that that horse won. He came with a rush on the far side of the course, but Judge Clark gave the race to Mr. Clare Vyner's Camballo, placing Claremont only fourth. The late Mr. William Allison, so well known as 'The Special Commissioner,' was one of those who always referred to the official result of this race as an error on the part of the Judge and not representing the actual order in which the first four horses passed him.

In the Two Thousand Guineas of 1924 there was perhaps even greater dissatisfaction on the part of the crowd with the verdict. This is more within the reach of the memories of the average race-goer of to-day, and it will be recalled that Diophon and Bright Knight fought out a desperate and

thrilling finish on opposite sides of the course. Diophon was awarded the race and the paddock was immediately in a ferment. A considerable number—not only those whose wish was father to the thought but many others too—were confident that Bright Knight should be returned the victor. But the spectators were divided into two camps (as is usually the case in such finishes), and this only provoked argument and made the excitement greater.

The fact of the matter is that it is difficult enough for the Judge himself to decide on wide courses like those at Newmarket, when leading horses are one on the winning-post side and the other under the Judge's box. 'Hotspur,' discussing this particular race and the decision, said: 'At Newmarket the course is so very wide that the head of a horse galloping right under the box must seem very big compared with the head of one as distant as Diophon was in the "Guineas" race.'

A good deal has already been said regarding the care with which racing Judges note the colours jockeys wear as they are being weighed out, how special note is made of any alterations to the colours as printed on the card, how the Judge makes a point of having another look at the colours as the horses go down to the post, and how, also these officials become familiar with the jackets and caps of those who are regularly running horses. Even so, they and the public are sometimes confused with liveries which are very similar, or with rain-soaked jackets which are almost indistinguishable when they flash past the post on a wet day.

It is difficult to understand how the old-time Judges were as accurate as they were in the days before it was customary to register racing colours and for owners to stick to one particular set. Prior to 1762 there was no system of either registration or continuity—red, white, and blue being employed indiscriminately, whilst all jockeys appear to have worn black caps. The result was confusion and occasional inaccuracy in placing horses. In the year mentioned (1762), the members of the Jockey Club determined to fix distinctive jackets and caps which would always be worn when their horses ran. This was the beginning of the registering of colours.

It will be noticed by the colours given on an old race-card reproduced on page (135) that three jockeys rode in red, two in white and two in yellow. There were no distinguishing caps to the three red jackets ; there were no number cloths in those days, and, to make matters still more difficult for the man in the box, concluding heats were sometimes run in semi-darkness with lamps to light up the winning post. In addition to all this, it was usual at this period for a number of mounted spectators to join the horses contesting a race and gallop up the straight with them. This, again, would not tend to make the Judge's task any easier. Fortunately present-day Judges have none of these difficulties to contend with, though, notwithstanding, their task is more difficult in this age of shorter distance and faster run races than was that of those who preceded them in the office.

It is a debatable question if the camera would be any aid to accuracy in race judging. Apart from the delay which would follow in making the announcements—a delay which would be intolerable to an anxious pent-up crowd—there would be the question of deciding the psychological moment to take the pictures. The photographer who waited a fraction of a second too long, or pressed the button a fraction of a second too soon, would have quite a different result from that of the camera man who chose the identical second the first horse's nose reached the winning post. Probably no two photographs of the same finish would agree, and there would thus be more dissatisfaction and confusion than ever, even with operators long experienced and carefully trained to make the exposures.

In France the subject has been officially discussed in high Turf places, and a French sporting writer recorded that the views of some were that by replacing the eye of the Judge with the camera the trouble that ensued by Judges making mistakes in their placings could be avoided. He went on to say, however, that :

‘ It has been found that the result obtained by the camera varies greatly according to the state of the light, the finishing pace, the angle at which the horses are strung out at the finish, and also the number of horses finishing in line. To get an

approximately correct result it is necessary that the man with the camera should form a quick and accurate judgment of the extent to which these different factors are operating, and regulate the exposure of the plate accordingly,'

Then he adds what has always seemed to me to be the most obvious fact : ' Men with the unerring judgment necessary for photographing results correctly are harder to find than reliable Judges, and therefore it is felt that until a race of super-camera men is bred it will be better to rely upon the human eye of the trained judge to settle the result of a race.'

The appointment of a photographer to give the placings of horses in races would simply mean that he would have to take over all the functions of a Judge—deciding the particular moment at which a race is won and lost—and wait till his plate is developed to announce these placings. If he was quick enough to take a picture at the exact appropriate second then he would be competent to give an accurate decision without the aid of the camera. Moreover, the camera results would probably be very misleading in the case of a horse which has just won by a short head (or a nose) with other horses actually travelling faster, close up. A snapshot would possibly show one of these as the probable winner and as being half-a-length past the post in front of the animal which really reached that all-important position first. How misleading would such a picture be ! The whole of the order of the placings might be changed between the mental decision of the judge-photographer (for he would actually combine the offices), to expose his plate and the act of exposure. I have seen finishes again and again when occupying the Judge's box in which this would have been the case. A tired winner might appear to be only third or fourth, if other horses were travelling faster at the finish, and flashed past the post as the camera man recorded the end.

In 1925 there was a triple dead heat between Breezy Heather, Golden Book, and Rocos, and in 1924 Hope Deferred, Vaddy, and Buddha dead-heated for premier place in a selling race at Newmarket Craven meeting. In 1923 Marvex, Dumas, and Dinkie were bracketed together at Windsor. I carefully compared all the photographs I saw of



these finishes, and the discrepancy was so marked as to shake all one's faith in the camera as any aid to the deciding of the winner in a close finish. Indeed, few of the pictures suggested that there had been a dead heat and, conversely, made it appear (which was not the case) quite easy to separate the leading animals and place them 1, 2, and 3. This proves, not that the Judge was inaccurate, or that his eye was less quick than the inanimate eye of the camera, but that the manipulators of the latter are not to be relied upon with horses travelling racing pace, and with one (and only one) half-second at which a correct picture may be secured.

When shooting at game flying, or at ground game in motion, one doesn't aim at where the bird, rabbit, or hare *is*, but at the point one expects it to reach when the shot has reached its destination—a very different matter! There would have to be some such calculation worked out before photography would be any aid to race judging. Even then, as a camera cannot see or think, I am inclined to think it will never be generally adopted as an official verdict giver.

Speaking of a Judge being unable to divide the first three horses in a race, such races are not common, though there is a very long list of dead heats. It is computed that one in sixty races ends in this manner, and the past racing season of 1926 probably provides a greater average than this, Mr. Malcolm Hancock, one of the best of good Judges England has ever had, having therein given almost a record number of decisions to this effect.

At Sandown in 1915, Cardington, Kitty O'Hara, and Somali tied for the Walton Plate, and, in 1882, Marden, Gerald, and Leonora dead-heated for the Sandown Derby. Two years earlier at Lewes, Mazurka, Scobell, and Wandering Nun were dead-heaters for first place in the Astley Stakes, and a head behind them were Cumberland and Thora, who dead-heated for second place. Now, if a camera had had to be relied on to decide the placings in this event, it would probably have been quite impossible to give any decision at all, let alone an accurate one.

There is another historic instance of a triple—'triangular' seems to be the accepted term these days—dead heat : that

of El Hakim, Pryoress, and Queen Bess in the Cesarewitch Stakes of 1857. There were thirty-four runners for this event, and it is of interest to note that the winner had to pay £30 to the Judge. Geo. Fordham rode Mr. Ten Broeck's American bred Pryoress in the deciding heat, supplanting Tankesley, and won by a length and a half, with a head now between El Hakim and Queen Bess.

Two years prior to this the Judge was unable to separate four horses at Newmarket. There were only five runners; and Gamestar, Lady Golightly, Overreach, and The Unexpected all finished neck and neck together. The quadruple dead heat was run off with the result that Overreach eventually won by a head, the placings in the decider being :

Mr. Howard's ch. f. Overreach by Birdcatcher -	Wells	1
Mr. Steven's br. c. The Unexpected - - -	Yates	2
Mr. Burgess's br. c. Gamester - - -	Chillman	3
Mr. Morris's bl. or br. f. Lady Golightly - -	Basham	4

The strange thing about these very close finishes is, that though the average spectator of experience admits he only *thinks* he knows what has won, or frankly states he 'doesn't know till the numbers have been hoisted' at the direction of the Judge, criticism is at once let loose, every Tom, Dick, and Harry who has lost five shillings, immediately considering himself called upon to air his imaginary grievance that 'the Judge must be blind.' 'Anyone could see that the horse he gave it to didn't win,' or 'it was never a dead heat in this world,' and so on *ad nauseam*. Happily the Judge's duties necessitate his hurrying from the box to the weighing-room, so that he is generally unconscious that a howling crowd is anxious for his blood when they have the temerity to disagree with him, or rather with his fiat which has lost them their money.

In the 1925 triple dead heat at Folkestone, already referred to, most of the spectators were certain Mrs. L. Reynolds' Breezy Heather (T. Carey) had won, and there was a good deal of froth and ferment in the paddock. This yeast, however, is always evanescent and has simmered down by the time the runners for the next race are in the frame, to be

revived again in the race train after the day's sport and when everyone is in a cooler frame of mind.

It is noticeable that those most concerned with these debatable (or perhaps it would be more correct to say much debated) decisions have least to say of anyone. The Judge, too, is probably the least conscious of all of the manner in which the decisions he has given have been received, reviewed, vilified, and criticised. The late Mr. Langley was acknowledged to be one of the most experienced racing men and writers on racing of the generation which came immediately before us, and in 1914 he discussed a considerable number of races of which he personally had been an eye-witness, and the Judge's placings in connection with which were considered by many to have been inaccurate. He wound up by saying :

'It was stated after Black Tommy's race that he (Mr. Drinkald) threw up his conical-shaped hat, exclaiming, "I've won the Derby, and not a soul on except Drinky!" Whether true or otherwise I am unable to say ; but the Derby in question (Blink Bonny's) happened to be one of many remarkably close finishes that have caused a difference of opinion to exist between lookers-on and interested partisans respecting the genuineness of the Judge's fiat, which only that official could possibly decide. Hence it is most surprising and unjust to read at the present time how "some people thought Adamas won Blink Bonny's Derby," others that Pero Gomez defeated Pretender, others that Highland Chief defeated St. Blaise, and to increase the series, that Lord Clifden won Macaroni's Derby ! *In no single case did I agree with the dissentients from the official decree.*'

## CHAPTER XI

### THE GATEMEN AND PADDOCK POLICE

At most populous meetings the aid of the police force is called in to keep the course clear, and they are a most efficient body. The order which they preserve is very much superior to what could be attained by the old custom of having three or four clumsy, very often drunken, hard-riding clowns galloping up and down the course, never able to keep it clear, and very often in the way themselves. One or two men on horseback on some courses are very necessary to keep particular places clear, especially turns and such places, as being at a distance from the ropes, cannot be attended by the policeman. The Clerk of the Course is the responsible person to direct these matters and doubtless has quite enough to perform on race days to keep order. At those parts of the course where there are neither posts nor rails to define it, horsemen are apt to trespass, and it requires very great exertion to keep them off, the neglect of which might produce serious consequences to horses and jockeys.

Cecil in *The Sporting Magazine*, 1839.

THE gate-keepers constitute the last class of licensed racing officials—they are the regular staff of ‘ St. Peters ’ who know everyone and have such marvellous memories for names and faces. They are at their posts day by day and are a veritable human ‘ who’s who ’ as to the personnel of the Turf. I have often been astounded at their ready and successful response to a command from the Clerk of the Course : ‘ Go and tell Mr. —— he’s wanted at the weighing-room ! ’ Off one of them goes into the paddock amongst possibly several thousand people, not only with the knowledge as to who is required but where the wanted individual is most likely to be found.

The licensed gatemens who travel from meeting to meeting have a responsible duty to perform, requiring tact, courtesy, and discretion, yet a fixed determination to allow no one into the paddock without payment who is not entitled to pass

horses, for no other purpose than to help racing in the north. It also entered like iron into the souls of really good sportsmen, whom everyone was pleased to see in the paddock, but whose finances were now such that they couldn't afford to pay. With such good fellows the past *did* count for something, but they saw their number was up, and many of us regretted it, felt for them and missed them. On the other hand, what is termed 'putting the bar up' excommunicated a large number of undesirables, and decidedly purified what had become an Augean stable. Incidentally it was the beginning of easier times for the men at the gates; for other Clerks of Courses followed suit and very considerably reduced their free lists just before the War. That list is now still further restricted, so that at all but a few small country meetings (at which often local men are allocated gates to save expense) no one 'gets in' without paying unless he is entitled or has express permission to do so.

At some fixtures owners and trainers who have not given entries to that particular fixture are not admitted. This is perhaps a short-sighted policy, for I have known of wealthy men who have been so annoyed at what they considered petty economy, and at having to turn away from their accustomed place of entry, that they have entirely withdrawn their support from meetings at which they have found the official at the gate had orders to admit only those who had horses running on that particular day, or during the meeting.

I remember once a millionaire, who had paid hundreds in entry fees at a certain northern fixture, being told at the gate that his secretary could not be passed in free. He interviewed the Clerk of the Course, who ratified the orders given to the gateman and declined to make any exception. 'Quite right,' replied the millionaire; 'he shall pay his pound, but I shall never run another horse at this meeting or come to it again.' Nor did he. This was a loss of about a hundred a year to the executive.

Of course gatemens are employed in other directions and capacities than to guard the entrances and to listen to the lies, misrepresentations, and cajoleries of those who still 'try it on.' They are not always given the same post—a wise

plan as most Clerks of Courses have discovered. There is the horse-gate, to which three or four men arrive with the same animal—one leading the horse, another on its back, another carrying the rubber containing the ‘tack,’ and yet another carrying something else, all seeking free admission !

Then there is the County enclosure to guard against the intrusion of those without badges ; the owners’, trainers’ and jockeys’ stand (which if not so watched is crowded with all sorts of folk with no claim to admittance), the entrance to the Holy of Holies—the weighing-room, into which there are frequent attempts at entry by those anxious to have ‘a word with a jockey,’ or just to see what is going on. I have been to race meetings in the bad old days at which the weighing-rooms were so crowded that the Judge and Clerk of Scales could hardly see, hear, or move, because of the noisy crowd who made a sort of club-room of these places. With a licensed man at the entrance, he quickly pulls up those he doesn’t know, and demands their business. If they cannot give a satisfactory answer they are not allowed through the portals. There might be even stricter scrutiny than there is, for, despite the prominent official notices as to who *is* and who is *not* allowed in the weighing-room and jockeys’ dressing rooms, quite a number of irresponsibles manage to get in by assuming an air of importance and walking past the St. Peter in charge as though they had three or four runners ‘in the next.’ When their faces seem familiar, and the gateman can’t quite place them, he makes a point of enquiring into their credentials, and they may be told as they come out, ‘not to go in there again.’

There is another licensed gateman in the weighing-room itself to get the jockeys out of the dressing rooms to the scale, and later to summon them with their ‘All out for this race now!’ to go and mount and get down to the post. This official also hoists the flag at the weighing-room door to denote the ‘all right’ when the winner has passed the scale or the flag to notify an objection when such has been laid. He may have to find and bring to the Stewards’ room witnesses whose evidence is required at an enquiry, and assist the Clerk of the Scales and Clerk of the Course in other ways. He acts

as an inner guard to prevent unauthorised intruders from entering into the weighing-room, and may be entrusted with issuing free race-cards and complimentary luncheon and tea tickets in the absence of the Clerk of the Course. Possibly he refuses as many applicants as he satisfies ; for, as in everything else, there is always a large number of people anxious to get something for nothing, even at the risk of being snubbed time after time. Occasionally they succeed in their efforts, and then they become marked men when the Clerk of the Course goes through the tickets and perhaps makes enquiries as to the identity and claim of Mr. So-and-So.

There are many stories told of the plans adopted to hoodwink the 'locals' placed in charge of gates. One is of a 'wrong-un' presenting himself at the free entrance and saying ' Starter ! ' ' But I've already passed in the Starter,' was the reply. ' Why, you d——d fool,' retorted the applicant pushing past, ' isn't there more than one race ? '

Then, so recently as the re-opening of Hamilton Park in 1926, the signature of the Secretary was forged to what purported to be a permit for a certain individual to pass in and out of the horse-gate. The same plan had been tried at Pontefract, and a caution had been administered. At Hamilton Park the head of the clique to which the forger belonged was paraded before the Stewards and told in plain English what the result of any repetition of such conduct on the part of any of his satellites would entail. It's a strange thing, yet a fact, that the average man's conscience is most elastic with regard to railway and race companies, and that the proudest, most independent men will demean themselves to crave favours from Clerks of race-courses.

It must always be so, however, that as one lot of this class of men is exposed and written down in memory's black book of the gatemen another lot rises up to take its place. Hence the Argus eyes of these officials are ever necessary, just as are those of the race-course police—who watch for known ' wrong-uns ' amongst bookmakers and prevent them from standing up to bet, and who enquire into any allegations made against ' bookies.' They have also to keep watch upon ' the boys,' and those parasites known as the ' tappers ' who make a

practice of demanding money from bookmakers and others. Outside go such undesirables before racing commences. Most of them are known both to the plain-clothes men and the gatemen ; but again, as there is said to be a fool born every minute, so I am sure that there is a constant stream of racing rogues and Turf 'twisters' ready to replenish the ranks of those who are either excommunicated or 'put inside.' Occasionally these plain-clothes staff men get roughly handled by some of the gang, one of whose number they have 'nabbed' or whose pitch they have queered ; but one hears less of these vendettas and of revenge than used to exist. Perhaps racing crowds are more law-abiding and peaceful than they were, perhaps it is only that the supervision is now much more complete, and that the supervisors are many more in number and better acquainted with those who bring racing into disrepute. It certainly costs much more to staff a race meeting in these days than it used to do at one time to run the whole fixture, stakes included ; but the end has been attained, and it is economy in the long run now that all meetings are gate-money fixtures. It was the passing of the days of free admission which made this increase in staff necessary. And it was when gate-money meetings commenced that stakes were increased and crowds were placed under some measure of control. Incidentally it was then that some protection was given from sharps and welshers, and some provision was made for the comfort of the increasing racing public, for them to see the whole of the races and to be able to move about both in the paddock and in the betting ring.



## CHAPTER XII

### RACE-COURSES AND RACE-COURSE INSPECTORS

Owners of valuable horses will not, willingly, run them on bad courses, although in many cases they are obliged to do so ; and it is unlikely that we shall ever see large fields competing in our long-distance races unless more attention is devoted to the supervision and better condition of our racing tracks. It is pleasing, however, to note that there have been signs recently of more attention being paid to the condition of racecourses. . . . The appointment by the Jockey Club of a practical Inspector of Racecourses would be, probably, a step in the right direction.

Col. W. HALL WALKER (now Lord Wavertree),  
in *The British Racecourses* (1907).

It has already been shown that even within the memory of living men neither owners, trainers, nor jockeys seem to have been very exacting regarding the freedom of race-courses from holes, stones, dangerous turns, and other disadvantages which would not be tolerated to-day, but appear to have abounded up to the seventies. Some of the courses at the country meetings were little short of a scandal, and little attention was paid to them from one meeting to another. The tracks themselves were bad, only a short part of the run-in was fenced off (often temporarily with ropes), the turns were very sharp, sometimes a high-road had to be crossed, or a farm-yard galloped through, and at some fixtures the track was so narrow that the horses had to be started (as at Northallerton) in rows behind each other. As to accommodation for public, jockeys, and officials—well, what there was, was of a most primitive character.

Racing at York was transferred from Clifton Ings to the Knavesmire in 1730 because the former place was more than once flooded. Mr. Alderman Telford planned the new track on Knavesmire, had the boggy portions drained, and arches

built, so that a century later Judge Orton claimed that 'York is now one of the finest courses in the kingdom.' As against this we find John Kent records in his *Life of Lord George Bentinck* that in 1845.

'The ground at York was excessively deep, a large portion of the course being under water. I well remember Mr. Ramsay's Malcolm, a very powerful chestnut two-year-old colt, who won the Prince of Wales's Stakes on the first day, sank down into the mud as he was being saddled, and was quite unable to extricate himself until five strong men, whose assistance was invoked by Tom Dawson, his trainer, applied their shoulders to his ribs on both sides of his body, and fairly lifted him out of the morass into which he was subsiding. Next morning, when I took my horses out to exercise, I encountered an old acquaintance on the farther side of the course under the wood, who thrust his walking stick into the spongy soil up to its handle, remarking, "there is no bottom to be found."'

Over half a century ago the still-living at 99 Mr. James Melrose had Knavesmire thoroughly drained for the then Freeman of the Micklegate Ward of the City, and the work then performed has stood to this day.

We are able to estimate the ideas which prevailed in 1872 as to the construction of a race-course from the minute-book of the Redcar Race Committee which has been loaned to me. For many years up to 1871 the races were held on the sands, but the following year the land on which the present course is situated was secured. Here are some of the decisions then arrived at by the Committee :

'That Mr. Adamson's offer to give £8 for the privilege [*sic*] of erecting his stand on the racecourse be accepted on condition that all passes issued by the secretary be accepted by him or that he shall give £10, and all passes given by the secretary shall be paid for by the Committee at one shilling each.'

'That a fence be formed with hurdles with posts 6 ft. 6 in. long, 7 by 3 scantling, with two nails, 3½ in. by 1½ in., and 9 ft. long, secured to the posts with bolts ¾ by 5 in. long, a diagonal stay 3½ by ¾ and 9 ft. long, pales 4 ft. 6 in. cut to a point at the top and 3½ in. broad by ¾ in. thick, secured with good wrought iron clout nails, fully 3 in. apart. The fence of sufficient length

to fill the necessary openings for the racecourse, and to be used for the ring. That Mr. Wren's offer be accepted according to the above conditions for £8 10s.

'That Mr. Mewburn's offer to stub the fences, lay in the drains, and make the ground good for the sum of £2 (!!) be accepted.

'That Mr. Thos. S. Dawson (appointed Clerk of the Course) be requested to come down to assist in laying out the ground as soon as the fields is [*sic*] at liberty.

'That Mr. W. Redman be instructed to examine and make a frame for telegraph the same as at Stockton, also to look at the judge's stand and the winning-post.

'That the admission to the racecourse be 2d. each (no change given), 4 wheel [*sic*] carriages 5s., 2 wheel [*sic*] carriages 2s. 6d. Admission to the grandstand and enclosure 5s.

'That 100 yards of railing be put at the opposite side of the ring.'

In 1874 it was decided : 'That the drain be laid and the edge (*sic*, hedge) stubbed up and levelled to the satisfaction of the Committee appointed. That Thomas Fleming's offer be accepted at 5s. 6d. per chain, the distance being 15 chains, more or less, and the work to be done in 14 days from 20th April 1874. That John Hutton's tender be accepted for levelling the race-course for £36, the 700 yards (more or less) ; the sods to be taken off 2½ inches thick, the ground to be properly levelled, and the sods laid down to the satisfaction of the Committee, and to be completed by 31st March 1876.'

Despite the last resolution the bills advertising the 1874 meeting had concluded with the announcement :

'Since last year, objection having been taken to ridge and furrow in the winning field of race-course, it has been entirely removed and the course *made entirely level*. So now it will bear favourable comparison with almost any course in England, the run-in being half a mile course as nearly straight, with great width.'

Even regarding a meeting with the age and status of Stockton-on-Tees, we find so late as 1886 *Baily's* 'Vandriver' of those days writing :

'Another thing is wanted at Stockton, if it is to become a first class meeting, and that is a better stand. The present one





is, of course, hideous and too small. The weighing-room and business department, press-room, etc., were probably thought sufficient fifty years ago, but are lamentably behind the times now. To find an old-fashioned, ramshackled stand like the one at Stockton is almost unprecedented. Perhaps we are getting too luxurious in our notions ; but still it is not luxury to expect that the weighing-room, press-room, and the jockeys' room should be three separate apartments instead of being rolled into one as is the case here.'

I have talked with men—my old friend Mr. R. I. Robson amongst them—who can recall when the weighing-room and jockeys' dressing-room at York was only divided by a sort of hanging arras, and when there was straw littered on the floor of both. At other places a tent was erected for jockeys to dress in and for the Clerk of the Scales (his scales were borrowed from the local miller or from some neighbouring farmer's granary) to carry out his duties.

As to a hospital for any injured jockey, stabling under the control of the executive and other conveniences, they were in the womb of the distant future. It was the Jockey Club more than the spirit of competition which acted as the first influence to bring about drastic changes. In 1841 there were 154 race-courses in England, and in 1871 there were only six short of that number—many of them execrable, ill-conducted, and positively dangerous, but none the less 'recognised meetings' so long as they had been advertised in *The Racing Calendar*. In 1870, however, the members of the Jockey Club determined to purge racing of some of the abuses which were dragging the name of the sport into the mire, and which existed particularly at the small fixtures where the supervision was in the hands of local men of little reputation or experience. So they passed a rule in 1870 to the effect that no race of less value than £50 (free of all deductions) might be included in the *Racing Calendar* advertisements. This at once signed the death warrant of many small fixtures.

A little later a further blow fell upon those who had succeeded in satisfying these conditions, in that it was stipulated that the added money must total 300 sovs. for each day's racing. Some of the small meetings continued for a time as

unauthorised or 'flapping' fixtures, others were discontinued forthwith. The Jockey Club from time to time made it clear that alterations to certain tracks were to be made if racing was to be allowed to continue on them. Gradually owners became chary about running their horses over certain courses, and even the long-suffering jockeys commenced to complain about the risks they were compelled to take when riding over some of the worst tracks such as Halifax, Durham, Richmond in Yorkshire, and at Paisley, which latter place the Jockey Club condemned in 1908.

In 1883 the Stewards of the Jockey Club issued a notice that applications for licences for new race-courses would only be granted in future under very exceptional circumstances, and in no case unless a straight mile was possible and provision made for races over a distance of ground.

All this is a very brief survey of the evolution which led up in 1907 to the creation of the office of Inspector of Race-courses, on the suggestion of the late Viscount Downe. In that year Col. G. Eason Wilkinson, who had done much to make York a pattern fixture, was appointed as the first to hold this office, the duties in connection with which are concerned more with the track being in order for riders and horses than for the comfort of the spectators and their ability to see the sport for which they in the main pay. Certain requirements laid down by the Jockey Club—adequate hospital and stabling accommodation for instance—come within his purview, and he may from time to time make suggestions to Clerks of the Courses and report that improvements or alterations are necessary, or examine the plans before alterations are made. Turns, width of courses, badly drained portions of certain tracks, gradients, contours, fencing of tracks, and other matters germane, were what the Jockey Club particularly had in view when they added an Inspector of Race-courses to their lists of the officials.

Lord Stanley announced at the 141st dinner of the Gimcrack Club held in 1907 that the Jockey Club was to appoint a Race-course Inspector, and *Baily's* 'Vandriver,' in dealing with points in his Lordship's speech, remarked :

'The announcement that an Inspector of Race-courses

would be appointed created but languid interest. A fairly general opinion seems to be entertained that the office would be largely a sinecure. Paid Stewards would make it a part of their duty to inspect courses before racing took place, and it is not an unheard-of thing for honorary Stewards under N.H. Rules to do something of the kind on occasion. Lord Stanley spoke as though everything had been done for stand accommodation to the neglect of courses. I fancy that if the Stewards of the Jockey Club had to put up with the stand accommodation provided for the public, throughout the racing season, they might modify this opinion, good as some of the accommodation is.'

The National Hunt Stewards soon followed suit, and in 1910 Major Cotton was appointed as their Northern Inspector, Mr. R. Dand succeeding him in 1920, and Col. Wickham taking his place in 1926. Major Cotton is now Inspector for the Western area and Mr. Hugh Peel acts at the Southern meetings. The duties of Inspector of Race-courses under N.H. Rules are perhaps more clearly defined. A certain standard of height and width of obstacles is demanded, and tape measure in hand the appropriate official can easily ascertain that the requirements in this respect are complied with. As to the course itself the conditions are less exacting than 'on the flat,' insomuch as at not a few small country meetings there is ploughland to be galloped over—at Brocklesby, Kelso, and Rothbury, to quote only three instances. In these days of artificiality plus competition, however, those controlling fixtures are only too anxious to conform to the wishes and suggestions of those who run horses at their meetings. No doubt the existence of an Inspector of Race-courses acts as a safeguard and spur, and enables the Jockey Club Stewards to feel that if all is not as it should be they would be informed immediately. In a few cases of somewhat effete and lethargic executives, the Inspector has been helpful in the suggestions he has made as well as instrumental in seeing that such suggestions have been carried out. On these courses jockeys have had cause to be, and have been, grateful for the changes which have been made.



## CHAPTER XIII

### BOOKMAKERS AND BETTORS

O, it's Bookey this and Bookey that, and Bookey go away ;  
We're far too swell to have you near, so by the railings stay ;  
Behind the railings is your place, so please behind them stay,  
And when we want you we will come. So there I bid you stay.

S. F. OUTWOOD.

THE profession of bookmaker does not rank very high in the table of precedence—not even if you use the alternative description ‘commission agent.’ To be ‘something on the Stock Exchange’ on the other hand, if less definite, carries with it the stamp of high respectability. Yet the twain in many respects differ but little. There are degrees in both ; good, sound, honest practitioners in each profession—also blacklegs who degrade them. Men in all ranks of society have ‘made books,’ many have risen from humble origin to be the associates of the highest in the land through their successes as bookmakers. One of the faculty, who contributed the chapter on Bookmakers and Bookmaking to the *Racing World and its Inhabitants*, said : ‘Bookmakers usually start poor, and not seldom remain so. A great many people suppose that the bookmaker has much the best of most deals on the course. This may have been so formerly, but is by no means now the case. On the contrary, at the present time the well-informed, acute backer has just the best of it. Bookmaking was a fortune ; it is at present hardly a living—bad debts are perhaps the chief bugbear of the business.’

Let us glance at the fortunes left by some of the biggest men in the ring, who operated when men *did* bet, and when there were fewer men engaged in the business. Perhaps one of the most remarkable men who ever made a book was John Jackson, who became one of the most substantial layers and

backers in the north, and in addition a prominent owner and bloodstock breeder. He had a meteoric career on the Turf. He won £27,000 on Ellington's Derby, regarding which there was a whispered scandal, referred to in the chapter on Turf officials, and probably more than that when Blair Athol won the same classic. Born at Oran, near Catterick, in 1828, Jackson was the son of a sporting farmer who was keen on pony racing and had a few 'tits' (as he called them) which ran for small stakes—a saddle or bridle one day, and £5 or £10 the next—and carried all before them. Possibly more was won by backing these 'galloways' than in stakes, and probably it was these tilts against the ring which gave John Jackson—'Jock of Oran' he was called—a taste for betting when quite young.

We are told his first bet was one of half-a-crown on Inheritress, when she ran at the long defunct Middleham race meeting, and that Jackson commenced his career as a penciller by 'standing' the bets of the Duke of Leeds' Hornby Castle servants, then with a 'silver' book at the coursing meetings in his own part of North Yorkshire. His father did not approve of his son neglecting his work on the farm so much, and told him plainly that 'racing an' coursing's all right as a bit o' sport, but they're neea good ti neeabody ti mak' a livin' at.' Young John, however, had got the laying and betting fever. As his father would not advance him the small capital he thought necessary to be able to 'stand up' and bet he borrowed a fiver from a local saddler. The still hale and hearty Mr. Tom Watson, who was ten years Jackson's junior, was later to distinguish himself in the coursing, cricket, football, and running world, and to be Master of the Darlington Harriers for eighteen years, told me the other day that Jackson always used to say that he was responsible for him laying one of the first planks of his rapid and wonderful success in the world of wagering. A generous man, Jackson never forgot what he took to be an obligation to Mr. Watson. The latter told the story when I spent the day with him on 18th January 1927, he then being in his 88th year, and with memory as clear as it had ever been.

Mr. Watson's father was a saddler in Darlington, was intimately connected with coursing, and both trained and slipped greyhounds, as well as being the President of the local coursing club for many years. Knowing his affection for a useful dog, some gipsy tinkers once arrived at his place of business with a blue and white whippet bitch. It so happened young Tom and his brother saw her first and determined that by hook or crook they would become possessed of her. Their father was not keen on their having any more dogs, but the boys pleaded so hard that he at last gave way, and the bargain with the gipsies was struck—five shillings and two ferrets passing between them for the whippet. 'I think,' said Mr. Watson, 'she was the best of the many hundreds we had. We took her to Catterick to a rabbit coursing meeting there and entered her for two stakes for dogs under eighteen inches. Before we started young John Jackson, whom we knew as a country lad we had met at coursing meetings, came up and said: "You've started another game now! Is your dog good for owt?" I told him she was a nailer and that I thought she would win both stakes. He asked a few questions about her and why we were so confident, and then said: "I mun back her then, and try an' get hold of a bit o' money. If I could only get a bit o' brass in me pocket I'd soon make it addle (earn) a lot more. If you hear owt to t' contrary you mun let me know, an' if your dog wins, I'll mak it all right wi' you." Well, our little dog won both stakes, and we made two matches against greyhounds, which she also won. Lad-like, we thought we could go on running her for ever and winning for ever, so, against John Jackson's advice, we matched her against another greyhound that same afternoon, and at the fifth attempt she was beaten. Jackson came up afterwards, and seeing our disappointment at defeat, said: "I've won more over your dog to-day than I've ever had in my life before. She's cleared me over £50, so here's a fiver for you. I don't think I shall ever want money again."

'This,' said Mr. Watson, 'was the first day's betting to money' (as it seemed to him then) 'Jackson had ever had, and he never looked back afterwards. I met him frequently

in after life, and at every Waterloo Cup till his death in 1869 at the early age of 41. He used to say, “It was that little bitch o’ yours that put me on my feet—is there owt I can do for you?” Once he did me a good turn in helping me to hedge some money on the Waterloo Cup, and a very good win I had.’

Later, John Jackson owned Saunterer and Tim Whiffler, became ‘the Emperor of the Ring,’ bought Fairfield, near York, and settled down to breed bloodstock, but did not live long to enjoy his wealth.

Mr. Joseph Pickersgill, who died on 23rd August 1920, rose from being a butcher boy in Leeds to the first layer in Tattersall’s. He commenced his career as a penciller by betting on ‘The Midden’ at Leeds, and died at the age of 70 owning a considerable amount of property there and in all £746,459—at least that was the amount at which his estate was valued for probate. A very quiet, even cultured man, Mr. Pickersgill possessed a personality, and all the instincts of a gentleman. Just as he found there was more money laying the odds in the ring than selling meat, so he rapidly discovered that it was a much more remunerative side of the business laying horses than owning them. So he soon put away his white jacket with green seams and his black cap which he had registered in 1881. The only horse that ever really did do him any good was Robbie Burns which James Watson trained for him at Richmond. In Tattersall’s he numbered King Edward among his patrons, but insisted that his own son should steer clear of betting.

Leeds had another big bookie, contemporary with ‘Pick,’ in the late Mr. George Drake (he raced as “Mr. G. W. Smith”), who died at Panal, near Harrogate, on 18th July 1925. It was always thought that he was a much wealthier man than the £131,136 at which his estate was valued for probate showed, but there were many channels in which the money he made on the Turf went. Amongst them was the big white elephant training establishment, Warwick House, which he built at Middleham, moving there from the moor itself. He had theatres, greyhounds, running men, fighting men, and boxing men, amongst his *entourage*.

Beginning as a 'runner' for Leeds 'Midden' bookies, he set up as a penciller on his own behoof, assuming his mother's maiden name of Drake. 'Drakey,' as his associates and those familiar with him called him, soon built up a big business and bet to big money, but he was never a Joe Pickersgill in any sense of the word. Though a handsome man—even carrying with him a certain air of distinction—he never cultivated the refinements which appealed to Pickersgill. Moreover, he had not the restraint of language or restraint in other directions which characterised the other Leeds Tatt's leviathan. It is said that he brought off a £10,000 coup in a £38 race at Folkestone with Hercules II, which he had bought in Ireland for 500 guineas. This horse had never run in England before he appeared in a Novice's 'Chase at Folkestone in 1901, and, as there was not a penny for him in the ring and none of 'Drakey's' carefully distributed S.P. commissions came back, he started at 10 to 1. Although an astute business man with a wonderful memory and a remarkable capacity for figures, he died without having made a will—or at any rate no will could ever be found. I remember he once had a bright abortive scheme for re-starting the ill-fated Leeds races—but he always had some scheme in that active brain of his, and always many irons in the fire. Another north country bookmaker who died wealthy was Mr. Joseph Errington, who left behind him £123,662.

Mr. Charles Hibbert of Nottingham, who owned many horses in his day and had some bad years, died in 1915, and left £103,498. He would probably have been a wealthier man if he had packed up a year or two before he did. He was fond of the bottle too, and was always ready to back himself to drink more champagne without being under the table, than anyone who cared to take him on.

It was the same as to bad years and to bad debts with Richard Fry, and certainly with Jim Buxton of Newcastle, who had literally hundreds of thousands of bad debts on his books accumulated during the slump which followed the War years. Poor Buxton committed suicide on 22nd May 1927 by gas-poisoning. He had a very bad time at Thirsk and York meetings, and on returning home after the latter

was so depressed that he put an end to all his pressing anxieties by gas-poisoning. It was said he had £250,000 owing to him. He it was who first publicly snubbed a client who asked, 'Did you get my cheque the other day, Buxton?' 'Yes!' replied husky-voiced Jim; 'Twice!—once from you and once from the bank.'

The late George Herring was a most generous man during his life, and *lived* too, with his beautiful place by the Thames and all the joys of a luxurious table. Nevertheless he wasn't a fool with his money, and was worth £1,371,152 when death beckoned to him. Another 'bookie,' J. William Howett of Wimbledon Park, London, died in February 1924 worth £102,737.

William Edward Davis (*not* Davies) died at Brighton, 4th October 1879, from paralysis and phthisis. He was known as the 'leviathan of the ring,' and not without some justification. He lost more than £100,000 over Teddington's Derby, and was the first to pay out on settling day. Epsom was his unlucky meeting, for he *lost* £30,000 over Daniel O'Rourke and £48,000 over West Australian, of which latter amount £30,000 went to the eccentric owner of the winner, Mr. John Bowes of Streatlam Castle. He recouped all his losses and retired with a huge fortune in 1857. He left £60,000 to the Brighton Corporation, and, though his widow disputed the bequest, it was upheld, and Preston Park was purchased with the legacy. Commencing life as a joiner, Davis began a little silver book with his fellow workmen, and was firmly set upon his legs over Sir Tatton Sykes' (the horse of that name) win in 1846.

Mention has been made of the late George Drake and Joe Pickersgill commencing their careers as bookmakers on the open space in Leeds known as 'The Midden.' For long local bookmakers carried on their profession there without let or hindrance, but eventually the police dispersed them, which, after all, seems to have been a short-sighted policy. Here they were in the way of no one and the whole *tout ensemble* was precisely the same as on a race-course. It was the same at Stockton-on-Tees and other places till police interference resulted in an increase of street betting.

In March 1927 I spent several evenings with Mr. Tom Devereux—a man of many parts—who was one of the most substantial commission agents and commission workers in the northern counties half a century ago. He is now in his 81st year and has given me some interesting word pictures of the Turf and the manner in which betting transactions were conducted in his day. Tom Devereux worked many commissions for Fred Archer, old Jim Snowden, Mr. 'Abington' Baird, and other men whose names loom large in racing history. Said Mr. Devereux to me :

'I found Archer a bad loser, and, though as honest as the day, none too ready to part when I had backed losers for him. Mr. Abington, too, wealthy as he was, was occasionally short of "ready," and I have often been his banker as well as his bookie. He was a bit of a scamp, and we eventually parted company in the court. I sued him for damage to some of my horses which he sent back to me lame and crocked up. In those days there was a great deal of villainy among amateur riders so far as their conduct on the Turf went, and my knowledge of what they did and the schemes they worked always makes me think their sportsmanship is rather overrated. I had to be "in the know" regarding their intentions, for I was either to lay or back for them. I can remember when at Durham we used to bet in the High Street before the time for racing arrived, and the same applies to many other fixtures. At Stockton-on-Tees here there was a great deal of betting sixty years ago, and I soon became the biggest bookmaker in the district and bet to big money. You'd be surprised at the famous names I still have on my books as "owing" from this time till I gave up—men who betted with me at Stockton, or by letter, or on the race-course. Some of them knew I wouldn't put them into court and traded on it. I have thousands still owing to me, though I took some of the big bugs before Tattersall's Committee to show them up after I'd either applied personally many times or gone to see them. One noble Lord who owed a lot I went to see and try to get a bit after I'd had a bad run. "Tom," he said, "I'll give you a good lunch, as much wine as you can drink, and as many pheasants as you can carry

home, but I *can't give you any money*, for the simple reason I haven't got any. Indeed, there are some bailiffs dead drunk in the kitchen at this very moment."'

Another defaulter Mr. Devereux went to see near Kirby-moorside was most incensed at being requested to 'pay up' and threatened to set his dogs on Devereux, who never got a penny of the money owing from that quarter. However, despite the thousands which will never be paid the old Stockton penciller amassed a considerable fortune, though it didn't all accrue from the Turf. Like George Drake, he went in for theatres, a music hall and real estate. Like Drake, too, he had boxing men, including Jim Mace, running, rowing, and pedestrian men 'in tow,' and many other irons in the fire. Let him tell his own story of later-day betting at Stockton-on-Tees. It will serve as a counterpart of what happened at many other places all over England.

'When I was twenty there were not half-a-dozen bookmakers in the whole district, and what betting took place was in the Ship Inn yard in the High Street. The police were fully aware of what went on, but did not interfere for a considerable time. The landlord was one Michael Hunter, son of James Hunter, who had the Vane Arms. They were a sporting family throughout. Tom, a brother of Michael, was a clever man on the box of a four-in-hand, and was the champion skater of his day. Frank Hunter, his cousin, was Judge at Stokesley Races. He began life as a barber, but netted a little fortune with one or two lucky bets, and stuck to what he had won—which is the only way to make money at racing. Well, I soon came to be looked upon as one of the biggest men in the ring in the North and got all the big commissions in this district. I regularly went to the Ship Inn yard and soon arranged for a regular telegraphic service of runners, jockeys, results, and starting prices. At that time telegrams were looked upon as something to be afraid of, and when boys looked into the yard with messages for me the other bookmakers immediately suspended business, and seemed to be under the impression that I had got to know the results of races an hour or two before they were run. Such an effect had these wires upon others that I had to arrange for them



to be brought through the back premises of the hotel without being seen by the crowd. I was the first bookmaker in the county of Durham to have a regular telegraphic service of this kind.

‘ Eventually the police interfered with our operations in the Ship Inn yard, and we were then moved to the market square near the stone cross where we openly conducted our business till we were again “ moved on.” For some years we were undisturbed on a pitch on the quay-side, near where the ferry boats for Middlesborough then started. The magistrates agreed we were better left alone down there and quite a lot of business was done. About this time I bought the White Hart Hotel, in Dovecote Street, and, in anticipation of further police interference, I built the Victoria Club adjoining it at a cost of £3000. This became the recognised centre of wagering, and the White Hart was the recognised sporting house of the district about 1887. After two police prosecutions, two convictions, and successful appeals against both of them, I retired from the White Hart, having my hands very full of other business. I had built the Alhambra Music Hall in Dovecote Street. I had a lease of the old Theatre Royal in Yarm Lane, racing ponies, a good many big commissions to work on the course for some very clever men who “ put it down,” and ran their horses very “ in and out.” Later, I owned a good many horses which Harry Hall first trained till he let me back one of mine and beat me with one of his own, which I found he’d backed on the Q.T. I then went to Paddy Drislane, who was also training at Middleham. For him, and for other trainers and many jockeys I worked commissions, at the same time matching and backing runners, rowing, cycling, and fighting men.’

Passing mention has already been made of the late Richard Fry, who died in 1902 with over £200,000 owing to him. He had immense sums through his hands, and could have retired at one time a very wealthy man till he started gambling heavily himself. He was born on Lord Carnavon’s Devonshire estate, and died a comparatively poor man.

George Gurney, who died at the age of 80 in 1923, only betted to ‘ ready ’ in the silver ring, so had no bad debts and

amassed a considerable fortune. Johnny Crossley is now the doyen of the ring, although Joe Bayliss and Harry Slowburne are no chickens. Johnny Crossley is one of the most remarkable men I have known in many respects and the only bookie some of the canny Scots have ever done business with, or have ever thought of doing business with. I don't suppose anyone ever saw Crossley the worse for drink, at any rate during my lifetime. Yet he has a generous capacity. I remember well a party of us—W. Binnie, Matt Peacock, and other trainers, travelling up from Newcastle together with Johnny on the way to Kelso races—he had come from London on to that little meeting! He refreshed himself with several 'doubles' on the train. We had a wait at Berwick, and had a walk into the town to sample the real Highland Dew ('doubles' again he had). As soon as we arrived at Kelso's Cross Keys it was more 'doubles,' some at dinner at night and till a late hour. He didn't turn a hair, and the following morning (a Holy Day of obligation it was), as I went down the corridor on my way to Mass I saw Crossley standing in his bedroom doorway dressed in a pair of gold pince-nez and a long pink 'nightie,' just having an early morning 'double.' He was in time for Mass nevertheless, like the good Catholic and altogether good fellow he is.

Poor old irritable 'Butcher' Frank (Frank Garvey) of Middlesborough used to be very abusive to anyone who wanted a shade over what were the market odds, and if he granted the graspers their demands, and they came back to draw, they sometimes got the full force of his fine flow of language if he had had a bad race. One sometimes forgot that the 'Butcher' was nearly, if not quite, as old as Johnny Crossley, but those who knew him best also knew that despite his temper and intemperate language he was one of the most generous of men. I remember once when there was no racing in the north going into the Cathedral at Middlesborough and finding the only soul in that big building was old 'Butcher,' reverently doing the Stations of the Cross. It impressed me much, for I thought how impossible it was to judge the heart of a man from a rough exterior. Old Frank died in 1924, and the north lost its oldest penciller.

I suppose the tall, good-looking, always suave Herbert Peacock is now doyen of the northern counties. I think he rarely goes farther afield than Yorkshire these days. He is one of those men—the yellow waistcoat, check trousers, diamond pin and ring (etc., and etc.), who can carry dress, but one would never mistake him for anything but what he is, though he combines a big cattle-buying business with shouting the odds. He has for some years had a few ‘flappers,’ and many are the times I have told him that thereby he connects himself with all the biggest blackguards and villains on this side of prison bars. Funnily enough he agrees, and says there are no words too strong, no adjective too extravagant for this illegitimate game. How anyone ever manages to make a book at such travesties on racing and abominations conducted under the name of sport entirely defeats me. For years Herbert Peacock lived at Redcar, but in recent years he has had a bit o’ land out Richmond (Yorks) way.

Other bookies who have left big fortunes are George Cooper, who died on Brighton race-course, with £288,519 to his credit; James O’Connor, £121,090; Walter Raleigh Spindler, £58,357; Harry Ulph of Yarmouth, £55,073; Robert Topping (of Topping & Spindler), £43,128; John Gully, £240,000; Swendells, £146,000.

In the long run the book always wins, for the number of backers with sufficient restraint to stick to their winnings is very small, and the money won returns sooner or later to the ring. ‘It is no use spending all your time spotting winners if you spend all your money backing losers,’ is an axiom too few remember, and the real bookies’ friend is the man who has a bet on every race. Nevertheless many bookies have taken ‘the knock,’ and many have found themselves a good deal worse off when they retired than they would have been if they had left the ring some years before. There is a certain fascination in making a book, just as there is in trying to beat it. The marvel to me is how bookmakers and professional backers can stand the strain week by week. Personally I think day by day racing a hard life, no matter in what capacity one goes.

As to the 1927 Betting Tax everyone is thoroughly

nauseated with the discussion which has taken place in the sporting Press. There has been a good deal of exaggeration, especially as to the tax having affected the attendance at race meetings. It is bad times and strikes which have conjointly brought down race receipts.

In the early days of bookmaking—for there was racing centuries before there were professional bookmakers—there was in London a certain Mr. David Welch, who laid the odds but was a bad settler. In consequence gentlemen meeting at their clubs had so frequently to admit ‘Welch had had them’ that the expression became quite a slogan of the time. Eventually it was abbreviated into ‘Welched,’ as connoting bookmakers who did not pay out to winning clients. Dr. Brewer in *Phrase and Fable* suggests that the word Welcher is derived from the old nursery rhyme ‘Taffy was a welshman, Taffy was a thief,’ but probably it was Mr. David Welch who gave his name to a system which is not by any means obsolete though much less common than it was. Often occasional Turfites (neophytes who only attend one or two meetings a year) are ‘welshed’; for them we have sympathy. We have none, however, for the greedy graspers who go past men of known soundness and integrity to get a point or two above the market odds with some bawling stranger whose stool only is there if the favourite wins. There is no excuse in these days for any man who is regularly going racing to be welshed, just as there is no mercy extended by a north country crowd when they succeed in catching a fleeing defaulter. At Catterick they used to tar and feather bookies who decamped in this way, the Race Committee providing the tar and feathers. At Stockton, Durham, and Wetherby they stripped them of their clothes, and threw them into the river. At Northallerton they horsewhipped them across country after tearing every shred of clothing from off them. At Newcastle the pitmen half-killed them, and they were pretty severely manhandled at most other places when they were caught. As Mrs. Beeton says, however, ‘first catch your hare.’

No one was more incensed with this class of dishonesty than Mr. Parker, who owned Joe Miller, One Act, and other

good horses. His nephew, Mr. Thomas Upton, when he was beginning his Turf career, made a winning bet at Goodwood with a bookmaker who declined to pay. On hearing of the incident Mr. Parker got his nephew to show him the man, and on the penciller still insisting he had never seen Mr. Upton before, he knocked him down, then dragged him into the weighing-room, removed a roll of notes from the bookie's pocket, and then kicked him all round the ring.

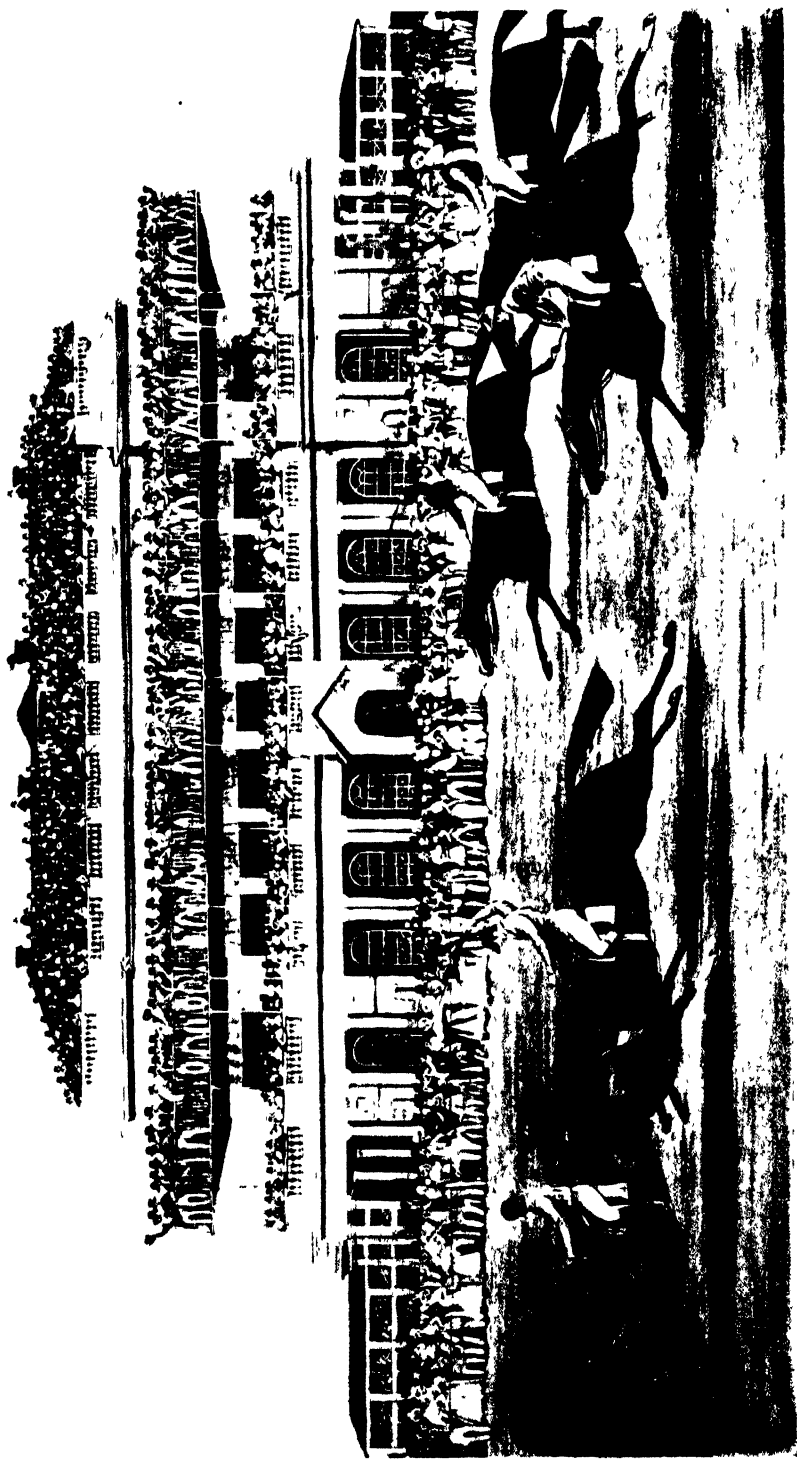
But mistakes sometimes *are* made. Only a week or two before his death, in 1924, I had a long chat with old 'Butcher' Frank, who was quite one of the veterans of the ring. He told me that he once went to Kendal races (long since defunct), and after a long-priced outsider had got up a gentleman claimed to have had a pony on the winner with Frank.

'I've never to my knowledge seen you before, I don't even know your name ; you certainly never had a bet with me, and you certainly won't *draw* anything from me,' said Frank to his excited and somewhat abusive applicant.

Still the gentleman insisted that there was no mistake and that Frank was endeavouring to work off an old yarn and practice upon him. To make a long story short, in the midst of high words and menacing actions another bookie came up and asked what the trouble was. 'Butcher' Frank told his tale, and the new arrival cleared the air by saying,

'It was *me* you had the bet with, sir, and here is your money.' The story ends pleasantly. The gentleman was profuse in his apologies, and a week or two later at Ripon had some horses of his own running, and came out of his way to tell Frank that he fancied them very much and to urge him to back them. This the Yorkshire penciller did, considerably to his own advantage.

Wagering, like drinking, has various effects upon different people. Some men we know tremble with nervous excitement when they have much at stake, and, win or lose, are in a state of nervous upset. Others have such control over themselves that the restraint, which makes them to all appearances unmoved, is probably just as much a tax upon their nervous system. Yet others are bubbling over with



WINNERS AND LOSERS



good nature when they win and conduct themselves with the quiet reticence of good sportsmen when they lose. They are

The men who kept on playing though the sun be in eclipse ;  
The men who go on losing with a smile upon their lips.

With many of both sexes it is the love of excitement rather than the greed for gain which actuates them in their tilts at the ring. A craving for the same transient elixir prompts other men to run all manner of risks to hunt lions. The simile is not after all extravagant ; for both sportsmen on the Turf and sportsmen on the desert and jungle require that courage and self-control which are integral and essential parts of the make-up of a sportsman. Speaking of these qualities in *The Book of the Lion*, my friend, Sir Alfred E. Pease, Bart., says :

‘ The man who knows no fear could not really enjoy a run with hounds, nor a fight with a lion, more than the man who, though he knows fear, does not show it. He who has never been frightened by a lion must have missed half the sport of lion-hunting. Where there is no fear there can be no courage. . . . Courage is the fear of being afraid.’

Remarkable was the consistent lack of emotion and placid indifference of Mr. John Bowes of Streatlam Castle, Barnard Castle, who rarely went to see his horses run, and, if he did, was quite unmoved in success or failure, whether winning or losing huge stakes. In a letter Sir William Gregory wrote on the death of Mr. Bowes in 1885, he described him as ‘ tall, slight, dark-haired, very refined, but very shy and reserved,’ and continued :

‘ When Mundig won the Derby in 1835, Bowes, who won nearly £20,000 on the race, returned from Epsom quite unmoved. A friend of mine happened to dine that same evening at Crockford’s, and asked the waiter who that dark, pale young man might be who was dining very quietly by himself in a corner of Crockford’s superb *salle-à-manger*. “ Oh, sir,” replied the waiter, “ that is Mr. Bowes who won the Derby this afternoon ! ” The same imperturbability was displayed by him at Doncaster, where, from the top of the Jockey Club Stand, he saw his fine colt Epirus driven on to the top



of the bank on the other side of the course, where he fell, extinguishing all the chance of winning a race which, with his fine speed and in very moderate company, it would have been impossible for him to lose. Bowes had a long telescope through which he watched the race, and was surrounded by people eager to know all that was going on. When the catastrophe occurred, he shut up his telescope, merely remarking, "My horse has fallen, and I think Bill Scott is killed." As matters fell out the famous Whitewall jockey escaped with a broken collar-bone.

'I well remember Bowes calling to ask me to do a big commission for him about Cotherstone, another of his Derby winners. One morning when I was still in my bedroom, my servant came in, announcing that Mr. Bowes wanted to see me. The occurrence was so unusual that I made all haste to join him. As I entered the room he apologised for troubling me at that unreasonably early hour, adding that he had come upon business, and that his colt Cotherstone had been highly tried and would win the Derby, for which he was then at long odds—to wit, 40 to 1. He asked me to back the horse for £1000 and to put something on for myself. I made one stipulation—that there should be no other commission in the market—to which he promised faithfully to adhere. I returned him the next day the odds of £23,000 to £1000. Some of the money was shaky in consequence of the liberties taken with the horse by a gang of nobblers, who thought they had the means of making him safe. When they failed in their nefarious efforts, through the precautions taken by John and Bill Scott under Col. Anson's advice, there was a rush to hedge, and I obtained permission from Bowes to lay them liberal odds; and, by taking good money instead at a lower price, I was enabled to hand Bowes £21,600 on the evening of the day of settlement.'

Sportsmen really used to bet in the old days. Some of them do now, for I heard that Charlie Hannam<sup>1</sup> lost £40,000 over a race in 1926. Lord Glasgow on one occasion jumped upon the table at the Star Hotel, Stonegate, York, when the great ex-prize-fighter, bookmaker Gully, entered the room

<sup>1</sup> Now retired from the conflict owing to the Betting Tax.

and offered 25 to 1 in hundreds against Brutandorf for the Leger. Then he offered the bet in thousands.

Lord George Bentinck, on the eve of Gaper's Derby, offered to take 3 to 1 about his horse. 'I'll lay it to you,' said Lord Glasgow. 'Oh, but I want it to *money*!' said Lord George. 'Very well, then, £90,000 to £30,000,' calmly replied Lord Glasgow.

Robert Ridsdale, ex-butler at Skelton Castle, won £47,000 over St. Giles's Derby, and eventually died with only 1½d. in his pocket in a stable at Newmarket.

William Davis, who, as already mentioned, began with a half-crown book, and became the first leviathan in the ring, laid Lord Stafford £12,000 to £1000 over The Cur in the Cesarewitch, and paid him ten £1000 notes shortly after the race, requesting a little time in which to pay over the remainder. He lost £50,000 over the Flying Dutchman's Derby, and over £50,000 in connection with the same race next year when Voltigeur won. Of this he paid £40,000 immediately after the race to ready money clients. The following year he laid Mr. Charles Greville (acting for Sir Joseph Hawley) £30,000 to £2000, whilst in Daniel O'Rourke's year he laid Col. Anson £30,000 to £1000 against the winner, and to Mr. Sandford Graham he laid £25,000 to £1000 against the same horse. When West Australian won the Derby, Davis paid away £60,000. He made a £100,000 book on this Derby. In 1873 he had £130,000 to his credit in the bank. When compelled to retire from the ring owing to paralysis some years later he had only £60,000 of that sum.

The Hon. Berkeley Craven, who was one of the plungers of his day, shot himself when unable to settle in Bay Middleton's year, and Lord Drumlanrig did the same when losing heavily over Saunterer's success in the Goodwood Cup. He laid £10,000 to £500 against him.

The Marquis of Hastings lost £100,000 over Hermit's win in the Derby. On settlement day, his agent took a cheque for £59,000 to the Victoria Club and personally paid the Duke of Newcastle £9775, Sir Robert Peel £15,975, and Mr. Chaplin £20,000.

Mr. Henry Steele paid away £110,000 in notes and gold on the Monday following Blue Gown's Derby. He was almost the first man at the Club that morning, and had a large table with piles of notes and gold arranged on it to settle.

There were indeed giants in those days, and one wonders what they would have thought of the Betting Tax when men *did* bet and when one plunger retired only to make room for another. As a matter of fact all the attempts to break the ring have failed, though in our time some large sums have been transferred from it to the banking accounts of those (several Americans amongst them) who could only calculate in thousands where bets were concerned. Perhaps the biggest haul which has fallen to an individual was Mr. Naylor's £150,000 win over Macaroni in the Derby of 1863, though four years later Mr. Chaplin won £140,000 on Hermit in 1867, but only got half of it in. Mr. Merry was said to have won £100,000 over Thormanby, but the real amount was £70,000.

One of the most remarkable bets on record was in Blink Bonny's Derby, when Black Tommy was so very close a second that many thought he had won. A bookmaker laid £20,000 to an owner's coat, waistcoat and hat, and nearly lost it.

At Doncaster in Theodore's Leger year there were two extraordinary bets against the winner, one of 1000 guineas to a crown piece, and another of £1000 to a walking stick, which had to be paid.

The largest amount that was ever stood on one horse was to Mr. Jaques of Easby Abbey, Richmond, and his confederate. This was on Mildew, which they backed to win £270,000 for Voltigeur's Derby. Sir Joseph Hawley on three occasions won between £50,000 and £60,000, viz., on Teddington in 1851, on Musjid in 1859, and Beadsman in 1858. He would also have won as much on Blue Gown, if he had not hedged. In 1844 Lord George Bentinck won £100,000 when Red Deer captured the Chester Cup, over which there was very heavy ante-post betting in those days. Lord George laid against every other horse in the race and snapped up any odds against Red Deer.

The very far-seeing George Hodgman, whom so many of us remember in his reefer coat, silk hat and leaf or flower between his lips, used to say he won so much over Paul Jones's 1868 Chester Cup victory that it took him all his time, methodical as he was, to discover just how much he *had* netted, and to decipher his pencil notes as to all the bets he had made. The late Mr. Hodgman was long a striking personality on the Turf. He registered his violet jacket and orange cap in 1859, and between that period and his death on 5th April 1913, he engineered and brought off many big *coups*, though he had not the same machinery to work upon as had his contemporary, Capt. Machel. George Hodgman was a clever judge of form, and the high opinion Admiral Rous had of him in this connection is mentioned in the chapter on Handicappers. It is interesting to note in passing that at the sale of Mr. Hodgman's effects at Stevenage a complete set of the *Racing Calendar* realised only £2.

In 1925 Mr. A. K. Macomber made a nice wager of £50,000 to £100 over a Cesarewitch and Cambridgeshire double (his Forseti and Masked Marvel), and drew his money too !

All this reminds one of the late William I'Anson's advice to his son (the present William of Malton).<sup>1</sup> It was this : ' If I was you I wouldn't bet, but if you *do* bet—BET ! '

What a harvest would have been reaped had there been a betting tax in those days of high wagering !

William I'Anson has often amused me with the story of a Malton miller's one and only wager. William could almost be said to have ' farmed ' the Seaton Delaval Plate at Newcastle, for he won it many, many times. One year he thought he had a dark horse for this event which, though tried one of the biggest certainties imaginable, was likely to start at a big price. He was running another horse in the same race which he felt sure would be made favourite, but which would never see the way the dark horse had gone. So he persuaded this Yorkshire miller, who had never been on a race-course in his life, to accompany him to the banks of the Tyne, and so

<sup>1</sup> W. I. took up his residence at Scarborough in Aug. 1927.

impressed him with what a 'money for nothing,' 'bet without money' certainty the race was for his dark horse that the Tyke decided to have £500 on.

'Ours is all on S.P.,' said I'Anson, 'so you can get yours on in the ring and put a tenner on here and a tenner on there, quietly. No one knows you there, and I don't suppose you'll make any difference to the price at the death.'

So this was done, the race was run, and the Malton horse just won by a head. After I'Anson had weighed out his jockey and was adjourning with some friends to the champagne tent, he met the miller returning from the ring looking anything but happy.

'Come and join us in a bottle,' invited the Malton trainer.

'No, thank you,' replied the miller. 'I've just time to catch the next train for York.'

'But you must not go yet,' insisted I'Anson, 'I'm certain to win the next race.'

'I've had sufficient of *certainties*,' was the reply; 'the last certainty has cured me of racing for life.'

'Why, you've won your money, what more do you want?' demanded the burly William.

'Ah, but only *just*!' was the reply. 'The way *you* talked I expected to see the horse win by a couple of hundred yards. It's too risky a business for me. I've won about £3000 by the skin of a horse's teeth, and nothing on earth would make me have another bet—no, William, it's too uncertain a game for me, so I'll bid you good-day and get back to Malton as quick as I can!'

And he went! He never had another bet during the remainder of his life, and always felt he had been badly treated by the horse only '*just winning*.' That's quite sufficient for most folks if they've backed a winner, isn't it?

Another story is told of a well-known society lady who backed her first winner at York. She was most elated and asked her mentor—an experienced Turfite—how people made bets when they were not actually on a race-course. The spontaneous reply was as witty as it was true:

'All you do is to find a respectable starting-price merchant, get his rules, make your arrangements with him as to the

limit to which you want to bet, study his code, send off your telegrams—and then *forward him a cheque every Monday morning*. It's all quite simple, little lady ! '

It was at another York meeting that Lady —— said to George Drake at one of his busiest moments, ' If I have a fiver on the favourite at 6 to 4, how much shall *I* win if *it* very nearly wins and comes in second ? '

There were only three runners, and ' Drakey ' replied, ' I'll make you a present of the horse, madam.'

## CHAPTER XIV

### TURF FLOTSAM AND JETSAM

THE late Nat Gould once paid me what some might consider rather a doubtful compliment. He said, 'What a lucky chap you are to have such an intimate knowledge of all the rag-tag-and-bob-tail and rogues of the Turf.'

What he really meant was that it is an education for one who sets out to write on racing to know the seamy, as well as the scientific, side of the great Turf game. And he was right. Twenty-five years ago, when I began my racing career, which incidentally has now landed me in the Judge's box, I decided to 'go the whole hog,' to live in training stables, to learn the science of training, to own horses and ride them in their work, to listen to the gossip of the saddle-room, and to rub shoulders with all classes who 'follow the meetings.' I have consistently carried out that plan, and sometimes wonder if there is any racing writer or racing official with such a wide and weirdly mixed assortment of acquaintances as I have.

I here and now unhesitatingly admit that though I have often stayed with some of the most prominent owners and trainers in the land and number many more amongst my personal friends, I have learnt as much from, and been more amused and interested by, the flotsam and jetsam of the ever-moving Turf army as those who are counted its 'highly respectable' superior officers. Let me add, too, that it is quite a fallacy to imagine that all this flotsam and jetsam is steeped in villainy, violence, sharp-practice, and roguery. They are *not*, though circumstances occasionally demand that they should employ such wits—often keenly sharpened—as God has given them.

I don't think there is a single 'spivvey' in England of

any standing whom I don't know, whom I haven't 'helped,' and with whom at one time or another I haven't travelled in train or horse-box from one meeting to another. I don't think there is one of them who hasn't thrown light on inner secrets of the Turf in which they were often engaged as minor actors because it was believed they would keep their mouths shut, and that even if they didn't their story would not have much weight in high places.

Now, it should be explained for those who are not acquainted with the terminology of racing, that a 'spivvey' is usually a man who at one time served his apprenticeship in racing stables but was of too nomadic a temperament to remain attached to one master or place, so struck out as a free-lance and 'travels the meetings,' doing spare horses for trainers who have brought more horses than lads to a fixture. They know all there is to know regarding dressing, 'boxing,' (entraining and detraining horses), and are usually dependable and useful men.

I well remember one of the greatest characters amongst them all, the renowned 'Malton George,' who died a year or two ago at Doncaster, reproving me for describing him as a 'spivvey' to a new-comer to the Turf who wanted to find someone to lead one of his horses round. 'There's Malton George there,' I said; 'he's a spivvey; engage him.' 'Excuse me,' said George, 'I'm *not* a spivvey—I'm a *paddock assistant*.' George, by the way, at one time held the proud position of 'King of the northern "spivs",' and referred to the others as his 'apprentices.'

Now, those who go the round of race-meetings without really knowing 'who's who,' and what the business of the 'regulars' or 'paddock assistants' is, are apt to be grossly unfair to these 'spare hands.' In their ignorance they imagine them to be light-fingered gentry, who are watching an opportunity to run through their pockets, or follow those who have been seen to have a good day and violently attack them, with intent to plunder, either in the train or the crowded approach to the railway station. I have yet to hear of the first case of this character.

I do not say that on a day when there are few spare horses,



and the 'spivvey' has to turn his attention to some other means of income, they do not look for what they term 'mugs,' and proceed to tip several horses in the same race with a view to 'drawing' from (or 'touching') the particular greenhorn to whom they whispered the name of the horse which ultimately won. I would not deny, either, that they prefer to conceal themselves amongst the legs of racehorses in a box and travel in extreme discomfort from one meeting to another rather than pay their fare. This, in the language of the 'spiv,' is called 'ducking the nut.'

Well do I remember the first experience I had in my cub days of this same 'nut-ducking.' We were taking some horses from Hambleton to run at Carlisle. We boxed them at Thirsk at the siding, to which station a well-known 'spiv' appeared apparently from nowhere to assist us. 'I'll be here when you come back,' he said loud enough for the railway officials to hear, and I settled down to the morning's papers without giving him another thought. When, however, we had passed the point at which tickets were inspected for the last time, a head appeared under that of one of the horses at the aperture, and to my astonishment it proved to be that of the 'spiv,' who reported 'The bandages are on all right,' and then disappeared.

On another occasion the railway officials were too 'nasty pertickler' (as one of the 'spivs' put it) and the 'nut-duckers' couldn't slip into horse-boxes *en route* to a Scotch meeting. Be there, however, they felt they must, as they had promised trainers to 'do' certain horses for them and to meet them when they arrived. There were too many of them to adopt the 'under the seat' method, so they entered a compartment with the air of directors, believing that a good start means a race half won. Various tin boxes filled with old tickets were produced, and though some of these were good for a portion of the journey, with a little 'date-sucking,' none of the 'briefs' would carry them right through. So there was nothing for it but for one or two to scramble under the seat when tickets were examined, and another to lie on the floor covered with the coat which was serving as a card table. There came a time, however, when there was

not a ‘ brief ’ amongst the lot of them, and desperate straits necessitated desperate action. They knew as well as the railway authorities where tickets would be taken, and, as the train moved away from the station prior to the point at which discovery awaited them, one of the party lent out of the carriage window and snatched off a porter’s hat. He slipped up the line when the train next stopped, with his stolen head-gear on, opened a carriage door authoritatively, shouted ‘ all tickets please,’ returned by the line-side to his friends, handed them each a passport, and all was well—at any rate with them !

With the light-fingered gentry I am less familiar, though knowing many of them by sight. Either from respect, or a feeling that I am a bird not worth plucking, I have never been in any way molested by them. A story is told of a party of these ‘ Boys ’ looking into a railway carriage window and saying, ‘ Oh, they’re only newspaper men—they’re no good to us.’ As a matter of fact, except a certain desperate gang, the usual run of racing ‘ Boys ’ do not look upon those regularly going racing as fair game. Most trainers and others, who are seen racing day by day, will tell you that they are treated almost as sacrosanct, and have never lost anything in their lives.

A gang of ruffians used to travel the meetings who were no respecter of persons. Money they *would* have from those who carried it, no matter who they were. Often, it is true, they tried peaceful means first. A favourite dodge was to go along the line of bookmakers—especially at some of the northern meetings—and hand them a bogus subscription list for some ‘ distressed miner’s family.’ Of course the pencillers knew them, were fully aware who would benefit by the subscriptions, and also knew that if they didn’t ‘ part ’ they would be attacked later in the day or evening and toll taken of the contents of their pockets, or that they would not (despite the ex-prize fighters many of them had as ‘ guards ’) be allowed to stand up and bet at all.

These ruffians—‘ the Boys,’ as they are called—stuck at nothing, and I have known them more than once ‘ wait upon ’ both trainers and bookmakers at their hotels—finding

their way up to their bedrooms—and demand a certain sum. They usually got it too, for if the victim had made a move for the bell he would probably have been stunned, and even if he had succeeded in giving the particular deputation in charge he would have had to contend with all the rest of a desperate gang. Recent cases in the courts have shown us that this type of blackguard, who carries a ‘persuader’ in his pocket, is by no means extinct despite the fact that the employment of a greater number of race-course police has considerably thinned them out. Sooner or later they are ‘nabbed,’ but unfortunately their places are taken by others, and the Puritanical man in the street classes us all by this standard and forms his opinion of racing and race-goers from a small section of highwaymen who are regardless of life and limb and entirely devoid of that sporting spirit which is found so strong in the other classes of Turf rogues to whom I have referred.

As to the three-card, thimble-rigging, pricking the belt gentry, I have very little love for them and less sympathy with their dupes. If there were not greedy, grasping, conceited fools with money at large, then there would be none of these race-train and race-course pests. They don’t try to ‘work’ amongst those whom they recognise as regular Turfites, simply because they know full well that they wouldn’t find them silly enough to back their eyes against the sleight of hand and legerdmain of the card manipulators. These rogues are greatly lacking in originality or imagination. Year by year their plan is exactly the same—the confederate who poses as the simple stranger, who turns the card up whilst the manipulator is conveniently looking out of the window and then wins ; who then turns a card corner up to indicate to the greenhorn the picture card. The greenhorn puts his money down only to find that the manipulator has had the impertinence to turn up the corner of another card in the re-shuffle. Time and again has all this been exposed, yet each season finds the new-comers who insist upon buying their own experience and think they are going to be more clever than thousands of others. Well, they find out that they *aren’t*, and I haven’t a bit of sympathy with them.



FLOTSAM AND JETSAM



Up to recent times the Mexborough and Leeds district was the hot-bed of two of the most expert gangs of three-card trick gentry, who must have spent a great deal in railway fares—and incidentally, it may be, bribes to certain officials. The gang, however, was broken up, but race-trains are yet by no means free, and I always think this type of rogue about as good a judge of character as one can find. They are wonderfully expert at picking out the likely 'customers,' and must have a considerable power of observance to know 'who's who' in a racing crowd and give those a miss who are too 'wide' or impecunious to be of use to them.

'I shall take what I hope is the first step, and it must be a rigorous step, to break up this gang, which has disgraced this great city of Leeds,' said Mr. Justice McCardie at Leeds Winter Assizes in 1926, in sentencing Joseph Burns, aged 44, a bookmaker's clerk, to six years' penal servitude for demanding money by menaces.

Some remarkable disclosures concerning the activity of race-course gangs in Leeds were made during the case. The detective in charge of it said: 'Burns' general character is very bad. His associates are convicted thieves and persons of known bad character. He is an associate of various race-course thieves all over the country. He is a pest and terror to business people of Leeds. Several instances have been brought to my notice of prisoner demanding money, but on every occasion people have been afraid to come forward and tell their grievances, being afraid of being attacked by the prisoner or his associates.'

The detective added that on one occasion Burns brought a London race gang to settle a dispute in Leeds, and after a fight between rival gangs one man was taken to the infirmary. There were several convictions against Burns, dating from 1898, including stealing, shop-breaking, inflicting grievous bodily harm, and in 1906 he was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to five years' penal servitude.

Whatever may be said of a certain class of advertising tipster I don't include those who stand up on a race-course and 'tell the tale,' amongst the rogues of the Turf. Of course no one who knows anything about racing believes a word

they say regarding conversations they have had with jockeys 'in a certain hotel last night,' or their other clap-trap stock-in-trade. Even if they *had* conversations with jockeys, most of us know that jockeys are the very worst tipsters in the world. I don't know a single exception to the rule of a jockey starting to back other jockeys' tips when his own riding days are over, who hasn't gone through his money, and I could now mention at least half a dozen who are practically penniless through this very cause. Some of them have turned tipsters themselves, or at anyrate sold the use of their names. I daresay that the 'information' one may buy for two-pence (with a lead pencil thrown in) is quite as good as the 'straight-from-the-horse's-mouth' tips one often hears in the paddock. Anyhow, I have had a lot of amusement from these hangers-on of racing in my time, and I remember one very audacious member of the fraternity recognising me amongst the crowd on the way to a meeting at which I had a couple of horses running. He immediately began to jeopardise his soul's welfare by a series of the most glibly told lies I ever heard in my life. Mentioning my name and that of one of my horses (which I thought had a sporting chance and nothing more) he said :

'Now in the third race there is a little horse running, the owner of which is standing round the ring. He told me this very morning that barring falling down dead it cannot possibly lose. It is seven pounds better than when it ran at ——— and the owner has informed me that he is having a big S.P. job over it. I'll give you the name of *that* horse for nothing : it is ———.'

And so he went on. As a matter of fact the horse won rather easily, but I'd never spoken to the tipster in my life. Ever after that he has always handed me his card 'free gratis' when he has spotted me on the way to the course. What always strikes me about tipsters is that if they were in possession of such valuable information as they would lead green-horns to believe, they would soon be very rich men and a lot of bookmakers would get what is called 'the knock.'

There are rogues amongst the vast crowd which goes racing, there are bound to be as in any other crowd ; but it

is quite a fallacy—a popular one no doubt—that racing is steeped in ruffianism, that all jockeys pull horses, that Starter and Judge can be ‘squared,’ that all owners ‘arrange races,’ that every other bookie is a welsher, that it is a matter for surprise and congratulation if a casual race-course visitor doesn’t have his pockets gone through—in a word : that we are all a bad lot. Even famous old John Jorrocks, good sportsman though he was, held the views of the ignorant, spoil-sport Puritans. Did not he once say :

‘ Racing is only for rogues ! I never goes into Tat’s on a betting day, but I says to myself as I looks at the crowd by the subscription room door, there’s a nice lot of petty larceny lads ! I’d rather be a black-faced chimney-sweep than a white-faced blackleg ! ’



## CHAPTER XV

### RACE-COURSE INCIDENTS

ALMOST every chapter in this book chronicles incidents, some curious, some sensational, some historic, connected with race-courses. In view of the magnitude and heterogeneous character of the vast army which moves on from one meeting to another (in addition to the local assemblage), and considering, too, the tenseness of those three hours on racing each afternoon, it is not to be wondered at that each and every day should produce a different kaleidoscopic picture. Incidents abound to-day for those with eyes to see, though happily they are more peaceful than they used to be in the violent days of old when 'win, tie, or wrangle' was the motto of many owners, when foul or dangerous riding was the main part of some jockey's art, and when racing crowds abounded with stop-at-nothing-short-of-murder ruffians. A whole volume could be filled with race-course incidents, but only a few have been selected to give some little idea of the changes generally, most of them for the better, which have come to pass in the control both of racing as a sport and of the very mixed crowds which from vastly diverse motives 'travel the meetings.' In addition are chronicled brief incidents dealing with other phases of the sport to illustrate some of the difficulties as well as peculiar and humorous situations which have arisen in the past, and may at any moment arise at the present time or in the future.

Let us try the villains and get them out of the way first. They have existed for all time,<sup>1</sup> as witness the

<sup>1</sup>The old term for racehorses was 'coursers,' and those who owned them, or were closely identified with the Turf, were known as 'horse-coursers.' Even in 1587 they seem to have been under suspicion, for in

following extract from a Scotch paper, 28th October 1822 :

At the late Dumfries races, a party of respectable-looking persons from the South advertised a game of chance, under the name of Un, deux, cinque, and erected a booth on the race-course for the accommodation of their customers. Among others a well-dressed and rather aged countryman entered the booth, and for a while contented himself with looking over the backs of the other visitors. At length he drew from his pocket a glittering half-crown, looked first at the one side and then at the other, as if to part with an old and valued friend—half extended his hand, and then drew it cautiously back, and at last exclaimed—‘ Weel, I’ll risk ye after a’ ; wha kens wha my fortun’ may be.’ Down went the half-crown, which by a single turn of the ball was declared the property of the bank. Sawney seemed astonished, grasped his sloe-thorn cudgel, and marched forthwith out of the booth, muttering as he went—‘ Weel the fool and his money is soon parted ; *Ung doo sink*—trowth they’re cheap o’ what they get what meddle wi’ ony o’ thae witchcraft names. But burnt bairns dread the fire, and catch me again gangin’ near ony o’ your outlandish gaming tables.’

‘ I think for rowdyism, welshers, and generally uncontrolled villainy, the old Scarborough race-course was the very worst I was ever on—and I have been on most of them in England,’ said the ex-owner and bookmaker, Mr. Tom Devereux, speaking to me in March 1927 about racing in the ‘60’s and ‘70’s. ‘ I remember on one occasion,’ he added, ‘ a whole train-load of some two or three hundred ‘ crooks,’ ‘ boys,’ welshers, and violent blackmailers, being collected before racing commenced, marched to the station, and sent off by train—a sight perhaps never before or since witnessed in connection with the Turf. I have seen men laid out with stakes and empty bottles the full length of the old Scarborough enclosure. Bill Nicholls was custodian of the ring, but he knew he was powerless with so many ‘ wrong ’uns,’

*The Government of Cattell* (by Leonard Mascall, first published in 1587) we find as a sort of preface :

#### A PROVERB.

To trust all current horse-coursers,  
I ’vise thee to beware ;  
For truth among the most of them  
Is found to be full rare.

and the number of the police they had in those days was absolutely no check. 'The boys' used to make a raid upon these little country meetings, knowing that there was very little to prevent them from having all their own way and that they'd come across a lot of country fellows, who probably never went to more than their local race meeting from one year's end to another. I remember seeing two of them covering each other as they 'went through' the yokels. I pointed them out to an Inspector, and one of them was 'nabbed.' As I was coming off the course at the subsequent York meeting a gang surrounded me and said : 'You're the — who gave one of our pals away at Scarborough.' One of them produced a knife, and I was sure I was in for it. However, I kept quite cool and gammoned them, keeping them arguing till some people I knew came up. I had a good deal of money on me and I was very glad to get away, as many of us were from Scarborough in those days when racing was not nearly so well conducted as it is to-day.'

Reverting to Scarborough Races, I fancy at the final meeting the weighing-room and turnstiles were almost demolished, as was the case in later years at a 'flapping' meeting at Blaydon, near Newcastle. I believe the 'fixtures' at the latter were thrown into the river.

The late Mr. Charles Richardson in *The English Turf* (p. 121), mentions the Scarborough *finale* thus : 'The place was famous for roughs, who came from all parts of the kingdom for the meeting, and I was present when they raided the principal enclosure. The attack had evidently been well organised, for at a signal it was commenced both from the course and the back of the stands. The turnstiles were rushed, and all the money taken up to that time secured, and at the moment the attention of the few police on duty was turned to the back of the buildings, dozens of ruffians climbed over the rails which divided the course from the paddock. Then commenced a scene of ruffianism ; book-makers were 'held up' where they stood ready to commence operations on the first race, watches and money were stolen on all sides, and for some ten minutes the utmost lawlessness prevailed.'

It was on 12th November 1878 that there was a wild scene and something approaching a riot on Shrewsbury Race-course. It so happened that the Clerk of the Course (Mr. John Frail) was at that time Mayor of Shrewsbury, so that his hand was strengthened in dealing with the disturbance. It seems that there was some welshing, and those who had suffered collected their friends and made an onslaught on the outside bookmakers and also on the refreshment booths. 'Vandriver' in his *Baily* description of the *melée* which followed said :

' However the riot began there were dangerous elements in the mob, who meant to go in for something much heavier than breaking up booths. Ex-Sergeant Ham, formerly of the detective force, is now employed by many Clerks of the Course to guard Tattersall's ring from the thieves and scoundrels that follow racing. A very zealous man, of undaunted courage, knowing well, and well-known of the aforesaid scoundrels, he has made himself very obnoxious to the fraternity, and there is no doubt that in the serious riot that ensued they went for him. Just after the last race a rush was made from the course into the enclosure, headed by some well-known London thieves, aided by some friends from Birmingham. The gate-keepers were overpowered and Tattersall's ring invaded. Blows were freely exchanged, and Ham was severely hit. For a moment or two there was something like panic among the bookmakers, for most of them had large sums of money in their note cases, and the invaders were not averse to a little robbery in addition to a murder. But some of the gentlemen came to the rescue, and the bookmakers recovering their self-possession the ruffians were at last ejected. Lord Marcus Beresford left his mark on one or two of them, and the small force of local constabulary did what they could, which was not much.

' Mr. Frail at once acted with the promptitude and decision which have always been his characteristics. There was every probability that the riot might be renewed on the morrow, and Mr. Frail immediately telegraphed to Birmingham for more constables. " From the Mayor of Shrewsbury to the Chief-Constable of Birmingham " was a wire sure to

receive prompt attention ; and when we were at breakfast the following morning the sight of thirty stalwart policemen under the immediate command of the chief, Major Bond—a very determined-looking soldier—paraded in front of the Town Hall, was very reassuring. The roughs had their day on Tuesday. Law and order were going to have the best of it to-day. Some villainous-looking ruffians we met in the street were evidently of this opinion, and looked cowed and defeated. It was satisfactory to hear in the course of the afternoon that all the ringleaders, one a notorious burglar only recently liberated, were in custody, with some half a dozen of their followers, and so ended what, but for Mr. Frail's prompt action, might have been a very nasty affair.'

Nearly half a century before this excitement at Shrewsbury, Lincoln seems to have drawn all the rogues and vagabonds of the Turf to its 1831 meeting. They had evidently taken in a good many of the rural folk who had come into the city for the races. Anyhow, they turned on these race-course pests, but, according to the account preserved to us in *The Lincoln Book of Dates*, required the assistance of 'the gentlemen'—but let me quote the account mentioned :

Riot on the race-course, the gamblers defeated, their booths destroyed and carriages burnt. This was at one time in the afternoon a very formidable affair. It is supposed that there was upwards of 500 thimble-riggers and gamblers on the course ; they certainly would have been masters of the foot people ; they drew out the legs of their thimble tables and fought desperately ; had not about fifty gentlemen and fox-hunting farmers taken the field against them. Many of the gamblers would remember to the day of their death the thrashing they got on Lincoln race-course.

*The Sporting Magazine* for 1832 thus refers to the Lincoln incident mentioned :

'The utter insignificance of these races would not have entitled them to a place in our monthly notices, but for the extraordinary scene that occurred on the third day. It appears by the local prints that the thimble-men, etc., had congregated to the number of seven or eight hundred, and for the first two days carried on their depredations with the

utmost effrontery, the constabulary force being insufficient to check them. On the third day, however, the countrymen mustered in great force, and immediately after the last race, they commenced a regular attack on their erratic plunderers. The battle was long and bloody, and the victory for some time doubtful. The thimble-men were armed with the legs of their tables, the rustics with clubs ; nor were these awkward auxiliaries placed in unskilful hands. The scene was horrific—here was one poor devil with his eye nearly cut from his head ; there another prostrate under the stupefying influence of a blow on the skull, while all but the combatants betrayed alarm for the consequences. At length the thimble-men were victorious. They pursued their antagonists with brutal ferocity, and would no doubt have inflicted some fatal injuries on them, but for the timely arrival of a large body of horsemen, who charged them on the instant and put them to the rout. The countrymen showed no mercy to their opponents. Some were frightfully beaten, others had their clothes torn from their backs, and their ill-gotten spoils divided amongst their conquerors, and several took to the river (not to the peril of their lives, for an old proverb stood in their way), to avoid a greater evil. On the dispersion of the gamblers, their assailants turned their rage upon the gambling booths, caravans, etc., all of which were broken into splinters and burnt into ashes. Great blame attaches to the corporation for having permitted these scoundrels on the race ground, nor can we avoid expressing our regret that so many respectable men should have joined in the scandalous violation of the law that took place after their defeat. Several are already held to bail for having assisted in the destruction of some marquees, and will be tried at the next assizes.'

Doncaster, like Lincoln, had a regular pitched battle before the thimble-riggers, belt-prickers, three-card men, and all their companions and satellites were routed. In 1825 the first attempt was made at Doncaster to disperse these parasitic gentry who preyed principally upon the simple country folk, but were also a menace to all and sundry when short of cash. The Town Moor was crowded with these undesirables, and as the 1825 opposition was repeated and threatened the

continuance of their long-established sleight-of-hand and other less peaceful performances, they held a council of war. The result of this was that on the opening of the St. Leger Meeting of 1829 they marched to the Town Moor armed with the legs of their gaming-tables and other weapons, generally adopting a threatening attitude. They were driven off, however, with little resistance by a party of mounted hunting men, armed only with whips. This was obviously too hollow a victory to be decisive, so a troop of the 3rd Dragoons was summoned from Sheffield, the 3rd West Yorks Militia, and the Doncaster Yeomanry were armed, and special constables enrolled. These combined forces, under the direction of the Mayor, the Town Clerk, Earl Fitzwilliam, Lord Milton, Lord Wharnccliffe, Lord Downe, the Hon. Mr. George Savile Foljambe, and other Yorkshire magnates, marched to the Moor on the following morning. According to 'Thormanby':

'They found it strongly barricaded, and behind the barricade they could see the big heaps of stones and thimble-men arming themselves with the legs of their tables, very handy and effective weapons in a hand-to-hand fight. Hoots and yells began to fill the air. The spectators, clustered upon the Grand Stand, and on every available coign of advantage, began to get nervous, and a very serious riot seemed impending. The leaders of the attacking forces consulted together, and it was resolved to try to effect an entrance to the Town Field by a smaller opening opposite the back of the Grand Stand. Simultaneously with this strategic movement of the mounted men, the police made a determined assault upon the field-gate. But whilst the thimble-men were engaged in front they left their rear exposed; a party of mounted men took them in the flank, and another in the rear. The barricade was broken down, and there was a hot fight for a few minutes; sticks and stones were flying in all directions, but a well-timed charge settled the business. The thimble-men broke and fled. Several of the ringleaders were captured on the spot; the rest made for the open country.

'And then came the amusing part of the scene. The horsemen gave chase to the nimble fugitives. Lord Milton

and the grooms and hunt servants from Wentworth were conspicuous in the pursuit. They kept well together, took the hedges in splendid style, and brought their game to hand in most sportsmanlike fashion. The gardens behind the Deaf and Dumb Institution offered good cover to the hunted thimble-men, but they were hustled out in fine style. In vain they doubled and dodged, hid in ditches, and crawled through fences. No fence or ditch could stop the gallant sportsmen who were chasing them. By this time, too, the spectators, finding the thimble-men were getting the worst of it, joined bravely in the fun and helped to catch the flying thieves. Such a scene of excitement and diversion was never witnessed on a race-course before or since. Finally, when the victors gathered to count the spoils, they found that they had taken some one hundred and fifty prisoners. A big caravan was chartered and the captives sent off in relays under strong escort to the borough jail. They were brought up two days later before the magistrates, and committed to Wakefield House of Correction for more or less lengthy terms of hard labour.

‘Such was the rout of the thimble-men, the story of which I heard from the lips of those who took part in it, among them that famous huntsman of the Fitzwilliam Hounds, Tom Sebright. The thimble-men never held up their heads after that. Their ring was completely broken. Isolated gangs, indeed, continued to prowl about the southern race-courses for a time, but as a regular organisation of audacious robbers they were crushed out.’

There was an interesting sequel to ‘Thormanby’s’ story, from which one gathers that not all by any means of the Turf crooks and desperadoes were carted off in the Doncaster caravan, as witness the following regarding Carlisle Races taken from the *Carlisle Patriot* for September 1829 :

The attendance was very numerous on the second day—at least 10,000 persons assembled round the wrestling ; and in all there could not have been less than 18,000 or 20,000 on the ground, we heard the number seriously estimated at 50,000. On Wednesday several stands erected by the innkeepers outside their tents for the accommodation of their customers gave way, and



numerous persons came to the ground with a crash, but none was seriously hurt.

The magistrate properly prevented the gamblers from setting up their tents on the ground. On the first day a fellow was taken into custody, having cut the seals from the chain of a gentleman's watch in the throng. It was mentioned at the ordinary on Wednesday that more than 200 regular thieves had left Doncaster races, on the way northward, to prey upon the natives at the autumn fairs. Many of them were accompanied by girls of ill-fame, whose task is to lure countrymen into the situation where they may be robbed with facility.

As I have already remarked, as a rule the light-fingered gentry have a certain respect for those who, like themselves, regularly travel the meetings, and it is not often one hears of a jockey, trainer, or race official being 'relieved' of any of his property. Once at Ripon Mr. 'Bob' Robson won two or three races, and in those days he used to bet in hundreds when he fancied one of his horses. After 'drawing,' someone advised him to keep his hand on his pocket, but he replied that he'd been racing 'for donkeys' years' and had never lost anything. On the owners' and trainers' stand, as 'Bob' had his glasses up watching the horses at the post, one friend quietly drew out his notecase and another adroitly removed a big pearl pin, which, by the way, he still wears in those white hunting stocks. Not a word was said, but after the race Robson went with a very sorry face to poor Philip Cadman (or was it to 'the Doctor'?) and said:

'They've been through my pockets and got the lot.'

'Hadh't you that pearl pin in, too?'

Up went Robson's hand to his tie—'Well! they've got that too!' quoth he. Not till later on in the afternoon did his friends restore his property to him.

The late Sir J. D. Astley ('The Mate') used to tell a story of how a very valuable gold watch was 'borrowed' from him on one City and Suburban day. He felt it going, collared his man, saw him pass the watch to another, whom he then seized, and eventually secured the watch and handed over his prisoner to the police. The 'tecs' told him they had never known of a watch being recovered when once passed from the snatcher to a confederate. On another

occasion 'The Mate' had a watch stolen from him—this time at Egham races. He sought out Nat Langham (the only fighting man to beat Tom Sayers), and told him of his loss. Before long, Langham returned to ask what colour the watch was. 'It was yellow (gold),' replied Sir John. 'It's a good job it's a yellow one,' said the prize-ring hero; 'I think I shall be able to get it back for you. You would have stood no chance if it had been a white one, for they've got the best part of three bushels of them white tickers, and they are half-way back to London by now.'

The funniest experience in connection with stolen property was that which the late Col. R. F. Meysey-Thompson had in Spain, where he won many races. He lost an amethyst tie-pin (presented to him in connection with Plenipo's victories), and on sending for the police, the man who had stolen it gave the Colonel in charge for stealing his own pin. Not for many weeks did the Spanish police hand over the amethyst, which they had seized as stolen property.

Has not Lord Lonsdale a story of a valuable jewel being stolen at a race meeting, and some of the light-fingered brigade apologising to him for 'one of his party, who was a novice and didn't know who was who, having made a mistake?' I fancy in this case the stolen property was restored within a very short space of time, as was a watch which Lord Lonsdale recounts was 'pinched by one of "the boys" dressed as a cleric.'

Apropos of the church, there are many instances on record of church bells having been rung to celebrate victories of locally trained horses, and we know that steeplechases got their name from the steeple of some distant church being the point which the cross-country competitors had to reach as best they could. We know, too, that many parsons have owned and bred racehorses, that at least two have been trainers, and that quite a number have ridden in races. The only instance, however, of which I have any record of a church being used as a grand-stand is that which Mr. W. H. Hutchinson, so long Secretary of Ripon Races, tells me. He states that when the Ripon fixture was held on Bondgate Green the Minster tower was, according to tradition, the

grand-stand. There were no bookmakers in those days, but that doesn't mean to say that those who climbed to the eminence mentioned did not have a wager amongst themselves. It is said that even when Dean Close used to preach an annual sermon on the enormities of racing some of the Carlisle clergy used to watch the sport taking place on the Swifts below, from the top of the cathedral.

With regard to racing and clerics and church bells being rung, I am indebted to Mr. H. J. Webb for a copy of an undated letter written by the Rev. J. W. King, the famous Lincolnshire racing parson, for whom the Osbornes trained at Middleham, and for whom the late Johnny Osborne rode. The letter is addressed to Mr. Charles Clarke, and obviously refers to Mr. King's success in the St. Leger of 1874, when his Apology, by Adventurer out of Mandragora, won with John Osborne in the saddle. Apology was favourite, and we read in a description of the race 'at the distance Leolinus showed symptoms of being in difficulties, Thomas Osborne being compelled to apply both whip and spur to keep within reach of Apology, upon whom John Osborne sat perfectly still until opposite the enclosure, when he shook her up a bit, and she won, amidst the greatest excitement ever witnessed on the Town Moor, by a length and a half. Trent was beaten five lengths from his less fancied stable-companion Leolinus, whilst The Scamp, though placed fourth by the Judge, was many lengths in the rear of the York conqueror of Apology.'

Apology was bred by Parson King, and ran in his assumed name 'Mr. Launde.' In 1874 she won the One Thousand Guineas, the Oaks, the Coronation Stakes, and the St. Leger. Here is Mr. King's letter alluded to :

Much obliged for your critique on Johnny's riding. All the writers in the different papers (I bought all I could get), speak of his artistic finish. I got a telegram *via* Ruskinton from the Squire—very hearty. He seemed to know my affairs better than myself. I have just written to Johnny telling him that some of the penny-a-liners should have alluded to his winning the 1000 twenty years ago (in 1853) on the grandmother 'Manganese,' when the papers said that he won 'hands down,' and when

Marsden said that he could get no sleep as the parson of Ashby had the church bells ringing all night, which he heard at Sleaford, all of which is fresh in my mind as though it was yesterday. Johnny has written advising me to have Apology covered. I have answered that I consider her my last plaything, and that a foal would be of no use to me, though it might increase my widdy's personalty. When I am sold up I hope she will have a good sale, and I hope you will come and bid and keep up the Ashby breed.

Mr. Webb, who kindly sends me this letter, adds : ' It is interesting that Ashby, Blankney, and Baumber, nearer Horncastle but all in Lincs., produced such horses as Manganese, Apology, Ascetic, Hermit, and Galopin.'

At Carlisle they had, as in most other places, extraneous attractions to the city during race week. ' The Druid ' tells us of the wrestling bouts, but before his day (*i.e.* in 1825) a local scribe wrote :

On the whole, sport was of a very inferior order. The number of horses was unusually small, and there were only two of any celebrity. Something should be done to effect an improvement—at present, large sums of money are little better than given or thrown away. . . . Messrs. Green's superb balloon ascended on Thursday, and was the grand object of attraction. So early as eight o'clock in the morning every entrance to Carlisle was literally crowded with equestrians and pedestrians flocking to witness the ascent of the balloon—an object wholly new to ninety-nine out of every hundred, for we believe that this is the first exhibition of the kind that has taken place in Cumberland. We have already hinted that Mr. Green was fortunate to obtain leave to ascend from the area within the walls of Carlisle Castle, as fine a situation as any in the kingdom.

Continuing in Cumberland, one has heard of many arguments in defence of racing and sport generally, but it would be difficult to find a parallel to the one given for the establishment of the sport at Egremont, namely, ' the charms of conversation.' Here is a paragraph which appeared in the *Cumberland Pacquet* for 22nd December 1795 :

The Egremont Hunt ended on Wednesday. The field sport on Monday and Tuesday was perhaps equal to anything of the kind ever enjoyed by the lovers of the chase, and the meeting, in point of convivial harmony, has not been excelled on any

former occasion since the institution of this society—which was originally framed for the purpose of cultivating a friendly intercourse amongst the gentlemen of the country, and for improving rural diversion by the charms of conversation.

It was not till 1838 that the Jockey Club saw fit to restrain mounted spectators from joining in with the runners in a race when they came into the straight for home. When it was customary for noblemen and squires to ride to the course,<sup>1</sup> and when only a certain part of the actual track was fenced in (often only with ropes) it was usual for quite a crowd to join in at the finish of races, with the result that accidents were frequent. We are told that in the reign of Charles II, when the runners at Newmarket approached the place at which His Majesty was located, some of the royal party joined in the race ‘at the utmost speed, scarcely inferior to that of the racehorses.’ Turf history tells us how one old jockey (who was not actually riding in a race) rode alongside his son (who was riding a competitor) to instruct him, and also how there were frequent collisions between runners and non-runners near ‘the chair,’ as the Judge’s box was called. Thomas Warton, the Newmarket poet of 1751, has left us a vivid word picture of the pandemonium which then existed, in the following lines :

See, like a routed host, with headlong pace,  
The members pour amid the mingling race !  
All ask, what crowds the tumult could produce—  
Is Bedlam, or the C——ns all broke loose ?  
Such noise and nonsense, betting, damning, sinking,  
Such emphasis of oaths, and claret-drinking !

Well, we manage things on the Turf better in these days.

Yet even the subsequent precautions taken to prevent mounted spectators from riding upon race tracks were not without danger, as witness the following instructions issued in 1839—the year following the aforementioned ban :

It is usual to have two ropes extending across the course, one about the distance post, and the other beyond the winning

---

<sup>1</sup> It is on record that on one occasion there 1000 horsemen attended Newmarket races, and also that at Epsom a mounted spectator interfered with the horses in the Derby. He was chased down the course by the starter and others, caught and horsewhipped.



IN THE OLDEN DAYS



post, to prevent horsemen from riding on that part of the running ground. The men who have the care of them should be particularly cautioned to be on the alert when jockeys are mounted, and clear the rope away in time for them to canter. When the race is over the rope will again have to be drawn across; but it should be first ascertained by the man that has the care of it that all the horses are gone up, especially when they are running heats. Those horses who do not run in heat are frequently subject to danger from the rope being inadvertently drawn across before they have passed it.

Now for some curious races and matches made between northern estate owners. The speed of asses either owned by them, or to be produced at a given time and place, was a favourite form of contest at one time. *The Spectator* (vol. iii. no. 173) has an announcement of another of these apparently once popular events as follows :

On the 9th of October (1711) will be run for on Coleshill Heath, in Warwickshire, for a plate of six guineas value, three heats by any horse, mare or gelding that hath not won above the value of five pounds, to carry ten stone weight if fourteen hands high, if above or under to carry or be allowed weight for inches, and to be entered on Friday the fifth, at the 'Swan' in Coleshill, by six in the evening; also a plate of less value to be run for by asses.

Mr. Spectator adds a comment regarding the ass race : ' Though by no means so noble a sport as the other was, I doubt not productive of the most mirth.'

These races between asses were not uncommon a couple of centuries ago when country squires were ready to make matches against anybody and anything, and when each locality was more or less compelled to rely upon its own resources for amusement. Though the following bill announcing an ass race probably advertised what was to be a fact, there was obviously a good deal of intended humour introduced into it :

On Wednesday next, the 27th inst. (1749), will be run for by asses in Tothill fields, a purse of gold, not exceeding the value of fifty pounds. The first will be entitled to the gold; the second to two pads; the third to thirteen-pence-halfpenny; the last to a halter, fit for the neck of any ass in Europe. Each ass must be



subject to the following articles : No person will be allowed to run but taylors and chimney-sweepers ; the former to have a cabbage leaf fixed in his hat, the latter a plumage of white feathers ; the one to use nothing but his yard-wand, and the other a brush. No jockey tricks will be allowed upon any consideration. No one to strike an ass but the rider, lest he thereby cause a retrograde motion, under a penalty of being ducked three times in the river. No ass will be allowed to start above thirty years old or under ten months, nor any that has won above the value of fifty pounds. No ass to run that has been six months in training, particularly above stairs, lest the same accident happen to it that did to one nigh a town ten miles from London, and that for reasons well known to that place. Each ass to pay sixpence entrance, three-farthings of which are to be given to the old clerk of the race, for his due care and attendance. Every ass to carry weight for inches if thought proper.

I have before me a later bill headed ‘ Gisbrough Races, Saturday, 14th August 1784,’ which announced :

A match between Sir William Foulis’ ass colt, Sturdy ; catch-weights, £1 1s. play-or-pay, the last comer-in to win. Change of jockeys, crossing, jostling, and kicking.

A purse of silver to be run for by men in sacks. Crossing and jostling.

#### LADIES’ PLATE.

A shift to be run for by ladies. No crossing and jostling. No lady to enter who has won more than one shift. A pair of cotton stockings for the second lady ; and a pair of garters for the third. Free for all weights and ages.

After the races, a soap-tail’d pig will be turn’d out. Whoever throws him over his shoulder by the tail to have him for his own property. Smoaking, cudgel-playing, and other entertainments.

JOHN HALE, *Steward*.

An ordinary at the Cock at Gisbrough at half-past two o’clock. The race to begin at five o’clock.

On 4th May 1728 the following advertisement appeared in the *Newcastle Journal* :

To oblige the public these are to acquaint them that Nicholas Dixon, Esq., of Blackwell-upon-Tees, near Darlington, in the county of Durham, hath now in his possession an incomparable Jack ass, twelve hands high, of a blue-grey colour, strong and

handsome, and without blemish ; he hangs his head, erects his ears, and droops his tail perfectly well. He was got by the famous Middleton Tyas ass, that won the plate in the Holme, near Croft Bridge, 1723, when several eminent asses did run. He is own brother to that remarkable ass that carried Mr. J. Chambers of Blackwell, so safely and so creditably, which was one of Mr. Anthony Richardson's large stud. His dam was by Lux's ass, his dam by Tattersdale's ass, his dam by Trail-coat's ass, his dam by Lickbarrow's ass ; his grandam lineally descended from Balaam's ass, which was of the very same blood with the ass Noah took with him into the ark, as anybody will testify. *N.B.*—He is four years old this grass (and is leaped), being the first year of his leaping, at a merry teaster day, and a merrier teaster wet, and an honest pint to the man.

Ten years later (1738) they were not beyond having an ass race on Thursday, 24th August, at Newcastle, as witness the following quaint advertisement :

A plate of the full value of two guineas with the condition that every horse, mare, or gelding that run should receive a prize according as they came in, and to pay no entering money. And, on the same day, to be run for by asses, a very good pack-saddle ; the asses to be rode by chimney-sweepers, and their brushes to pay them along. And, likewise, a hat, of the full value of half a guinea, to be run for by footmen, and each to receive a prize as he shall come in. And also to be danced for by young women, a very good gown, a suit of fine head-clothes, with a variety of ribbons, to be distributed to each dancer, according as they should perform. And also to be given for the diversion of the company 10 lb. of the best tobacco, to be grinned for by old men or women, and each person that grins for the same to receive a share thereof, according to his performance. Likewise, to be supped hot, six milk-bowls full of hot Hasty pudding and butter ; the winner, or he that sups most or soonest, to receive for his reward 2s. 6d.; and the rest in proportion, according to their dispatch and the quantity they supped.

The following is the programme of a fête in the reign of George III. The *Court News* made the announcement and also stated that the royal family was present :

All persons of jovial, friendly and loyal disposition are invited to be present at and to partake of the undermentioned county sports, which with others to be declared on the grounds, are intended, if the weather be fine, to be exhibited at Marden

Castle near Dorchester, this day, September 20th, at 11 o'clock in the morning, in honour of the birthday of Her Royal Highness, the Duchess of Wurtenbergh.

To be played for at cricket, a round of beef. Each man of the winning set to have a ribband.

A cheese to be rolled down the hill. Prize to whoever stops it.

A silver cup to be run for by ponies, the best of three heats.

A pound of tobacco to be grinned for.

A barrel of beer to be rolled down the hill. Prize to whoever stops it.

A Michaelmas goose to be dived for.

A good hat to be cudgelled for.

Half a guinea for the best ass, in three heats.

A handsome hat for the boy most expert in catching a roll dipped in treacle and suspended from a string.

A leg of mutton and a gallon of porter to the winner of a race 100 yards in sacks.

A good hat to be wrestled for.

Half a guinea to the rider of the ass who wins the best of three heats by coming in last.

A pig prize to whoever catches him by the tail.

One of the most curious races of which I have any record is that which took place during Whitsun week (May) 1724 at Northampton, for a prize of five guineas. The runners were two bulls, four cows and a calf, the former ridden by men, the latter by a boy. A contemporary account says : 'The cows threw their riders and the calf tumbled down with his, and was thereby distanced, so that one of the bulls won the wager before a vast concourse of people.' On the Aintree course there was once a race between an elephant and some ponies, whilst ass races were very popular there a little over a century ago.

I am indebted to Mr. Daniel Scott, of Penrith, for an extract from a paper he read some years ago to the members of the Carlisle Literary and Philosophical Society on Cumberland and Westmorland Sports. Here is the excerpt :

Perhaps the most curious race ever run in Cumberland was that which took place in 1834. The course was over twenty-four miles of moorland, with no paths or houses, and included the climbing of the rock-strewn Highcup-Nick to the top of the Pennines. The winning post was a small hamlet less than a

mile from the Durham boundary at Cauldron Snout, and the race was the result of a wager between two Appleby men as to which could reach that goal first on Fell ponies. One of the competitors was seventy years of age, and he alone completed the twenty-four miles, the time taken being five hours. His opponent got lost on the wide expanse of open moor and had to return to the starting point.

As a matter of fact it was no achievement for one of these hardy Fell ponies, despite the rough character of the course.

A quaint old Cleveland Race Bill in my possession runs as follows :

Roxby Races, on Tuesday, the 7th April, 1846. A silver cup, presented by E. H. Turton, Esq., 3rd Dragoon Guards, for draught horses *bona-fide* the property (having been in their possession the two previous months) of tenants of E. Turton, Esq. Four-year-olds, 10 st. ; five-year-olds, 11 st. ; six-year-olds and aged, 12 st. The second horse to receive five shillings from the last. Half-mile heats.

A Hack race of five shillings each p.p. with (left blank) added for hacks, *bona-fide* the property of the tenants of E. Turton, Esq. Catch weights.

Entries to be made to Mr. Ralph Welford, of Park House, Roxby, on or before the 1st March, 1846.

In 1925 there was a race for cart horses (to be ridden bareback) at a curious little race meeting, arranged by Mrs. Love and her son-in-law (Major Myles Stapylton), on the Hawkhills estate of the former near Easingwold, Yorkshire.

Historians generally believe that York stands alone in claiming the record of having had racing on the ice when the Ouse was frozen. We know that there was racing on Carlisle Swifts when the Eden was in flood, and that once the horses galloped as best they could in places hock deep. History also tells us that when Stockton race-course was by the side of the Tees sport was conducted under similar aquatic conditions. In January 1740, however, there was racing on the ice when the Tees was frozen, *The Gentleman's Magazine* recording the unusual incident thus :

Tuesday 15th : a race between six horses was run on the River Tees, near Barnard Castle ; three heats ; two miles each.

The York 'ice races' were a century and a half before

this, and the famous historian Drake states that after Martinmas in the year 1607 the river Ouse was frozen up, and that a horse race was run on the ice from Marygate Tower and under the great arch of (old) Ouse bridge to the Crane of Skeldergate Postern. Hillyard also alludes to this great frost and states 'there were matches of sporting, and horse races upon the river Ouse.' He adds that another great frost began the following year about the 16th of December, and that on New Year's Day there was a horse race on the ice from Marygate to the Crane near Skeldergate Postern.

Amongst the Richmond Corporation plate is a silver tankard known as 'The Snow Tankard.' It is dated 1615, was made by Marmaduke Best of York, and is inscribed 'The gift of Sir Mark Milbank, Bart., and John Hutton, sen., Esq., to the Corporation after a disputed race in a great snow at Easter.' The weight of the trophy is 34½ oz., and the inference is that as the two sportsmen named could not agree as to which of them had won the piece of plate they presented it to the Corporation rather than go to law, as was the case in a dispute at York a century later.

In the old days at Thirsk (and other) Autumn meetings many of us have seen Mr. J. W. Atkinson weighing-in the jockeys after the last race by candle light, but I only know of one instance of a race being run by lamp light. That was on the second day at the Lincoln meeting of 1804 for a new race—'The Welter Stakes of 10 guineas each, rode by gentlemen, 12 st. Mares and geldings allowed 3 lb., two-mile heats'—which had been included on the card on the second day. There were three heats, and before the last of them darkness had fallen, so that lamps had to be provided at the winning post. As this heat did not settle the matter, and complete darkness had fallen, we are told a compromise was arranged. Here is the result, and a copy of the official note accompanying it in *The Calendar* :

Mr. S. H. Lumley's ch. h. by Overton, aged	-	-	2	4	1
Mr. Thorold's b. m. Miss Nelson, aged	-	-	1	2	2
Capt. P. Burrell's b. g. by Precipitate, aged	-	-	3	3	3
Sir M. M. Sykes's b. g. Sir Pertinax, aged (ran on the wrong side of a post)	-	-	-	-	4 1 dis.

The third heat was run by lamp light ; after which a compromise took place between Mr. Lumley and the owner of Miss Nelson, the former to have two-thirds and the latter one-third of the amount of the stakes. The Stewards consented thereto, and desired that neither horse might walk over, but that it might be left to the Jockey Club to determine in what proportion the bets should be paid and received. They have since decided that the bets ought to be settled in the same proportion.

Chatting the other day with that hale and hearty octogenarian Stockton sportsman, Mr. Tom Devereux, he told me that in the days when there were a good many pony races in the north he often used to win these events at Sedgefield, Tow Law, Spennymoor, Redcar (where the races were on the sands in those days), and other places. The first pony he had was first called Northallerton Lass—a little thoroughbred. She had been the property of Austin, a steeplechase jockey, and her new owner re-named her Cerito, after a famous *danseuse* of that period. Mr. Devereux's first racehorse was unhappily named 'Rather Slow,' and he came by it in a somewhat peculiar manner. At Sedgefield races Rather Slow won a cross-country Selling plate, and, on being put up for sale, a well-known lady who kept a somewhat questionable house of roystering gaiety at Stockton, elated with the wine she and a carriage full of painted ladies she had brought with her had put out of sight, bid Rather Slow up till it was knocked down to her at somewhere about £70. 'Will you go into the office to pay,' requested the auctioneer. 'Pay!' said Mary, 'Me own a racehorse! I have as many "fairies" as I can afford to keep without saddling myself with a racehorse! Why! I haven't as many shillings as you want pounds.' So the sale was declared null and void, and everyone asked everyone else 'who wants to buy or beg a racehorse?' At last Mr. Tom Devereux said he'd have it at a price, and Bob Osborne (John's brother), who trained Rather Slow, took Mr. Devereux's price. The horse went to Tom Lunn at Richmond and won a few races afterwards.

At Thirsk one race-time Tom Green, that quaint old Beverley and Hambleton trainer, fought with the great Bendigo in a travelling booth and licked him, though Bendigo

had been champion of England in his hey-day. And it was on the one and only occasion that Fred Archer ever rode at Thirsk that the bellman was sent round to announce the fact that :

This is ti give notish that Mr. Fred Harcher, the greatest jockey of this or any other age, will positively ride at Thirsk this afternoon and is even now in the town. So there'll be no disappointment *whatsumdever*. God save the Queen and Mr. Fred Harcher.

So powerfully did this appeal to the sporting Thirskites that even the pum-Puritan chapel-folks, who had year by year drawn up an appeal for the races to be abolished, found the race-course an irresistible draw, and thither they flocked to see Fred ride. It was looked upon as almost tantamount to a christian duty for Yorkshire folk to do so even though they *were* excommunicated from their Little Bethels afterwards.

In this connection a story comes to mind of a curate who was asked to include the name of 'Lucy Gray' amongst those to be prayed for. He did so, and asked the following Sunday if prayers were again to be offered. 'Nay !' replied the churchwarden, 'there's no 'casion ti praay na mair—didn't ya hear she'd won last week? What's mair we all backed her an' if *you'd* had *onny* sense you'd have done t' same.'

To conclude this medley of race-course incidents reference may be made to a remarkable picture in the collection of Messrs. Fores & Co., the famous sporting print sellers of Piccadilly, which I reproduce as a frontispiece to this volume. It represents a match over the Beacon Course in or shortly before 1787, and the story goes that the headless horseman riding the white-stockin'd horse was so sure his nominee would win, that he commissioned Sartorius, the painter, to perpetuate the event. His horse, however, was beat. Whereupon, the artist holding him to his word, the owner-jockey refused to allow his head to be painted in.

My friend, Capt. R. H. Radford, informs me that a somewhat similar picture was in the Cambridge House

collection of Sir Walter Gilbey, but in this case the headless horseman has his head painted in. The picture which I reproduce is signed J. N. Sartorius, and is dated 1787. A careful search of printed records of racing has failed to identify either the headless horseman or the horses engaged in the match.





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